

Copyright © 2017 by Bible Publishing Resources by Don Anderson Ministries. The author's publication incorporates quoted, paraphrased and summarized material from a variety of sources, all of which have been appropriately cited in the best of our ability. Exceptions particularly aside within the realm of fair use, it is the nature of this publication to contain references to other works, which we have the faith to believe are not for sale. Any use of material without proper citation is unintentional.

A Great While Before Day

VOLUME XI

PART ONE:
January 1–June 30

**A New Devotional from
DON & PEARL ANDERSON**
with Mark & Donna Anderson Skorheim

PURE SCRIPTURE FOR THE SOUL

CELEBRATING
40 Years

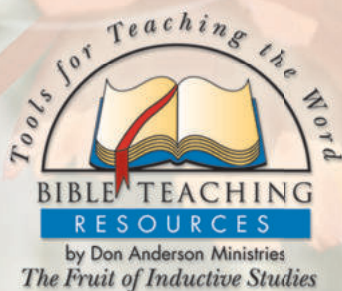
This devotional from Don and Pearl Anderson and Bible Teaching Resources provides pure Scripture for the soul to encourage you in your walk with Christ. Daily readings feature an inspiring devotional on a Bible passage, along with the words of a prayer or closing hymn.

"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.



Listen to Don Anderson on www.OnePlace.com

A GREAT WHILE BEFORE DAY

Volume XI (January-June)

Daily Devotional

by Don and Pearl Anderson

with Mark and Donna Skorheim

P.O. Box 6611

Tyler, Texas 75711-6611

(903) 939-1201 or

Toll-free 1-877-326-7729

Website: www.BibleTeachingResources.org

Scripture quotations are noted within the text.

Printed in the USA

Bible Teaching Resources

by Don Anderson Ministries

What Do We Do?

Formed in 1972 as a non-profit organization, Bible Teaching Resources is dedicated to excellence in Bible exposition and the provision of tools for teaching the Word. Our mission is: To glorify God through a national ministry which will continue to change lives based on the belief that “Christ is all and in all” (Col. 3:11b).

Communicating God’s Word accurately and clearly is our primary focus. Teaching the Word by means of technology is providing a larger platform. Classes are being taught weekly on the internet at OnePlace.com and six days a week in the Philippines by way of radio. Classes are also being taught in Texas cities by videoconference. Webcasting and camcording will be used in the days ahead.

Because our goal is to convey the Good News of Jesus Christ to as many people as possible, the BTR’s media division produces biblically-based messages on CD and in Mp3 format. Marriage videos and CD series are also available. BTR’s team also distributes Don’s many books. These resources for teaching, study, and spiritual enrichment are listed in our media catalog and are available at nominal cost from our office. Orders may also be placed online at www.BibleTeachingResources.org. A quarterly magazine, *The Grapevine*, and a daily devotional, *A Great While Before Day* (distributed semi-annually), are sent without cost to anyone who requests to be on our mailing list. To receive a personal weekly email from Don and Pearl, contact BTR at dam@bibleteachingresources.org. Hundreds of copies of Don’s series, *God’s Invitation: How to Become a Christian*, have been given out in classes or mailed from the office through the years. There is never a charge for this timely series and our constant prayer is that it will be used to bring others into a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bible Teaching Resources is a charter member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

A GREAT WHILE BEFORE DAY

The 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.

January 1 — Praise the Lord From the Depths of My Heart (Ps. 103:1-2)

Psalm 103:1: “Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.”

Psalm 103:2: “Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits—”

What a great Psalm to begin the New Year! I believe David writes this beautiful psalm of praise late in life. He’s probably about 68 or 69 years old when he writes the psalm. He has only about a year or a year-and-a-half left of his earthly journey.

Don’t tell me you lose your song when you get older! We ought to be practicing the Hallelujah Chorus. David has been through so many sad experiences and I believe that the most recent one has been the disobedience in the numbering of the people.

This psalm is pure praise. There are no petitions.

David is truly facing his final years with a pure attitude of gratitude.

Verse 1: “Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.”

When David uses the phrase “all my inmost being” he is saying “It’s from the depths of my heart. I’m not faking it.” He wants to be true and transparent in his praise to the Lord. It’s the real deal. He’s not going through the motions. He is passionate about his praise.

Psalm 33:21: “In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name” (NIV).

Bill Bright says: “One of the greatest lessons I have ever learned is the importance of praise and thanksgiving. The greater the problem, the more difficult the circumstances, the more important it is to praise God at all times, to worship Him for His sovereignty, love, grace, power, wisdom and might; for the certainty that he will fight for us, demonstrating His supernatural resources in our behalf.” (*Promises*, Day 155)

Verse 2: “Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits—”

You will notice it was “all my inmost being” in verse 1. Now it’s “all his benefits” here in verse 2. Verse 1 is focusing on the internal. Verse 2 is focusing on the external.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His dealings with us.

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 crushing heartaches, injustice, treachery, slander, and scores of other intolerable situations.” (Quick Verse 6.0)

Join me in singing Charles Wesley’s great old hymn **“O for a Thousand Tongues”**: *“O for a thousand tongues to sing My great Redeemer’s praise, The glories of my God and King, The triumphs of His grace. He breaks the power of canceled sin, He sets the prisoner free; His blood can make the foulest clean; His blood availed to me. My gracious Master and my God, Assist me to proclaim, To spread thro’ all the earth abroad, The honors of Thy name.”*

January 2 — The Benefit Package (Ps. 103:3-4)

Psalm 103:3: *“who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,”*

Psalm 103:4: *“who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,”*

The psalmist focused on the inward in verse 1 and the external in verse 2. Now he is going to outline for us the benefit package. What are His benefits which form the framework for our truthful and transparent praise?

There are 4 things we will look at in these 2 verses that form the foundation of our relationship with the Lord and our pure praise of Him. He: (1) “forgives”; (2) “heals”; (3) “redeems”; and (4) “crowns you with love and compassion.”

Verse 3: *“who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,”*

1. *“who forgives all your sins.”*

Isaiah 43:25: *“I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more”* (NIV).

Psalm 19:12-14: *“How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults. Keep your servant 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 meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer”* (NLT).

2. The second part of the benefit package is He “heals all your diseases.” It is the sores and wounds that sins have caused. Sinful passions are the diseases of the soul.

In Isaiah 1:5-6 the Lord describes the consequence of His children’s rebellion: *“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).

Verse 4: *“who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,”*

In verse 3 we learned 2 things from the benefit package. He “forgives all our sins” and “heals all our diseases.” Now in verse 4 we see the remaining 2. He “redeems your life from the pit” and “crowns you with love and compassion.”

This seems to be a such a tremendous picture of the parable of the Prodigal Son.

The word “pit” is a synonym for the grave.

Psalm 16:9-11: *“Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand”* (NIV).

Please join with me in singing a couple of verses of that great old hymn **“Calvary Covers It All”**: *“Far dearer than all that the world can impart Was the message that came to my heart (to my heart); How that Jesus alone for my sin did atone, And Calvary covers it all. The stripes that He bore and the thorns that He wore Told His mercy and love evermore (evermore); And my heart bowed in shame as I called on His name, And Calvary covers it all. Calvary covers it all, My past with its sin and stain; My guilt and despair Jesus took on Him there, And Calvary covers it all.”*

January 3 — Restoration and Renewal (Ps. 103:5)

Psalm 103:5: *“who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”*

We could make verse 5 a part of the benefit package if we like. That would be 5 things the Lord does for us: (1) “forgives our sins”; (2) “heals our diseases”; (3) “redeems your life from the pit”; (4) “crowns you with love and compassion”; and (5) “satisfies your desires with good things.”

Verse 5: “who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

When our desires are His desires He is free to grant them.

The result of this is seen in the last phrase in verse 5: “so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

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).

Psalms 92:14: “They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green” (NIV).

2 Corinthians 4:16: “Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day” (NASB).

Don Wyrten concludes this verse with this prayer: *“I praise You and thank You, O Lord, for all of Your blessings to me; Your forgiveness, Your healing, Your deliverance, Your love, Your compassion, and for fully satisfying my inner being with Yourself.”*

I think it would be appropriate for us to sing that contemporary hymn: **“You Raise Me Up”:**
*“When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary
 When troubles come and my heart burdened be
 Then, I am still and wait here in the silence
 Until you come and sit awhile with me
 There is no life—no life without
 its hunger
 Each restless heart beats so imperfectly
 But when you come and I am filled with wonder
 Sometimes, I think I glimpse eternity
 You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains
 You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas
 I am strong, when I am on your shoulders
 You raise me up...to more than I can be.”*

January 4 — The Lord Works and Communicates (Ps. 103:6-7)

Psalm 103:6: “The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.”

Psalm 103:7: “He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel.”

I feel the need to start by asking the Lord to forgive me for the many times I have attributed to luck or good fortune the blessings which His providential hand has provided so abundantly.

Verse 6: “The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.”

He is fully aware of what is going on. 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).

In Paul’s farewell message to young Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:17 he says: “But the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion’s mouth” (NASB).

Paul immediately looks to the future in the next verse. “The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen” (2 Tim. 4:18 NASB).

Oswald Chambers said: “The weakest saint can experience the power of the Deity of the Son of God if once he is willing to ‘let go.’ Any strand of our energy will blur the life of Jesus. We have to keep letting go, and slowly and surely the great full life of God will invade us in every part, and men will take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.”

Verse 7: “He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel.”

The Lord “works” in verse 6 and He communicates in verse 7.

How is it that “The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed”? A tremendous illustration of that scripturally is: “He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel.”

It is very interesting in Revelation 15 that we have, just prior to the pouring out of the 7 bowls of God’s wrath, a return to this very same song of Moses from Exodus 15. Revelation 15:3-4: “And they sang the song of Moses the bond-servant of God and the song of the Lamb, saying, ‘Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the nations.

Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou alone art holy; For all the nations will come and worship before Thee, For Thy righteous acts have been revealed” (NASB).

We say with a resounding YES! “The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.”

The words of Isaiah and of young Samuel come to my mind this morning.

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).

1 Samuel 3:10: “The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ Then Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening’” (NIV).

Join with me in singing a couple of verses of **“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, 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.”*

January 5 — A Snapshot of God (Ps. 103:8)

Psalm 103:8: *“The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.”*

Verse 8: “The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.”

There are 4 things that are said about the Lord in this verse. I want us to meditate for a moment on each. He is (1) “compassionate”; (2) “gracious”; (3) “slow to anger”; and (4) “abounding in love.”

Derek Kidner says: “This verse quotes, almost word for word, the self-portrait of God in Exodus 34:6, when He passed before Moses in the mount.”

Exodus 34:6: “And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, ‘The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness’” (NIV).

Don Wyrzten says: “He is compassionate and not only feels our pain and sorrow, but stands ready to alleviate it. He is gracious, choosing not to punish our sins in proportion to their seriousness... He is loving and even-tempered... He does not hold grudges... His love is infinite; His forgiveness, totally effective and complete...”

Bill Bright in his book *Promises* tells the story of Miriam Booth, daughter of the Salvation Army founder, who was stricken by illness. “It is great to do the Lord’s work,” she replied with gentle grace, “but it is greater to do the Lord’s will.” (Day 27)

Adrian Rogers in one of the last books that he wrote says:

This is important in our prayer life. We need to pray in keeping with the word of our testimony. As I have suggested earlier, here are some ways to encourage your faith:

- Rather than “Lord, be with us,” pray, “Father, we welcome your presence.”
- Rather than “Lord, give us victory,” pray, “Lord, you are victory. I thank you to cause us always to triumph.”
- Rather than “Lord, defeat Satan,” pray, “Lord, I thank you that Satan has been defeated by your shed blood.”
- Rather than “Lord, give me strength,” pray, “Lord, you are my strength, shield, and deliverer.”
- Rather than “Lord, help me to be a better servant,” pray, “Lord, I consciously yield myself to you. I report to duty.” (*The Incredible Power of Kingdom Authority*, 200-201)

What an awesome God we serve! I feel it very fitting for us to express our praise to the Lord by singing 3 verses of that great old hymn **“Majestic Sweetness Sits Enthroned”**: *“Majestic sweetness sits enthroned Upon the Saviour’s brow; His head with radiant glories crowned, His lips with grace o’er-flow, His lips with grace o’er-flow. He saw me plunged in deep distress And flew to my relief; For me He*

bore the shameful cross And carried all my grief, And carried all my grief. To Him I owe my life and breath And all the joys I have; He makes me triumph over death And saves me from the grave, And saves me from the grave."

January 6 — Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound! (Ps. 103:9-10)

Psalm 103:9: "He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;"

Psalm 103:10: "he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities."

Verse 9: "He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;"

We learned in verse 8 the 4 things that characterized the Lord: (1) "compassionate"; (2) "gracious"; (3) "slow to anger"; and (4) "abounding in love."

Now in verses 9 and 10 we see 4 things "He will not always" do. "He will not always": (1) "accuse"; (2) "harbor his anger forever"; (3) "treat us as our sins deserve"; and (4) "repay us according to our iniquities."

We see 2 things here in verse 9 and then the final 2 in verse 10.

Here in verse 9: (1) "He will not always accuse" and (2) "nor will he harbor his anger forever."

Because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ upon Calvary's cross, the Father now treats us as sons and daughters.

Hebrews 12:6-7: "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?" (NASB).

2. "He will not...harbor his anger forever." His wrath and anger were spent in the death of His Son on Calvary's cross.

Verse 10: "he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities."

3. "He does not treat us as our sins deserve."

I find myself singing that great old hymn by William Newell, "At Calvary": "O, the love that drew salvation's plan! O, the grace that brought it down to man! O, the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary! Mercy there was great, and grace was free; Pardon there was multiplied to me; There my burdened soul found liberty, At Calvary."

4. "Or repay us according to our iniquities."

No, God the Father assumed the total debt for our sins. "Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe; Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow." What a glorious and great God we have!

It's interesting when we take the 4 characteristics of the Lord from verse 8 and parallel them with the 4 things that are said that "He will not always" do in verses 9 and 10: (1) He is "compassionate" therefore "He will not always accuse"; (2) He is "gracious" therefore "He will not...harbor his anger forever"; (3) He is "slow to anger" therefore "he does not treat us as our sins deserve"; and (4) He is "abounding in love" therefore He will not "repay us according to our iniquities."

Let's sing verses 1 and 2 of "**Grace Greater Than Our Sin**": "*Marvelous grace of our loving Lord, Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt, Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured, There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt. Sin and despair like the sea-waves cold, Threaten the soul with infinite loss; Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold, Points to the Refuge, the Mighty Cross. Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that will pardon and cleanse within; Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that is greater than all our sin.*"

January 7 — How Great Is His Love! (Ps. 103:11-12)

Psalm 103:11: "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;"

Psalm 103:12: "as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."

Verse 11: "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;"

Why is He “compassionate,” “gracious,” “slow to anger,” “abounding in love”? Why will He not always “accuse,” “harbor his anger,” “treat us as our sins deserve,” “repay us according to our iniquities”? The reason is: His attitude is love. His love is so great that it is “as high as the heavens are above the earth.”

You will notice the Psalmist makes this stipulation that this great love is “for those who fear him.”

To fear the Lord is to demonstrate in our lives the 4 R's: (1) respect for Him; (2) release to Him; (3) relate to Him; and (4) repent of our sins.

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).

Verse 12: “as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.” His actions: “he removed our transgressions.” Because of His great love for us He acts on our behalf.

Remember the story of Naomi and Ruth coming back to Bethlehem and meeting Boaz the kinsman-redeemer? Then Ruth comes back from the night on the threshing-floor and reports to her mother-in-law the words of Boaz. Listen then to Naomi's advice to Ruth: “Then Naomi said, ‘Wait, my daughter, until you find out what happens. For the man will not rest until the matter is settled today’” (Ruth 3:18 NIV).

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...” (NASB).

He has taken the action necessary out of great love to provide for us an eternal salvation.

C. H. Spurgeon said: “O glorious verse, no word even upon the inspired page can excel it! Sin is removed from us by a miracle of love! What a load to move, and yet is it removed so far that the distance is incalculable.”

Romans 5:8: “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (NASB).

Please join me in singing verses 3 and 4 of **“Grace Greater Than Our Sin”**: *“Dark is the stain that we cannot hide, What can avail to wash it away? Look, there is flowing a crimson tide; Whiter than snow you may be today. Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace, Freely bestowed on all who believe; You that are longing to see His face, Will you this moment His grace receive? Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that will pardon and cleanse within; Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that is greater than all our sin.”*

January 8 — Faithful to Finish (Pearl)

“We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work” (John 9:4 NASB).

“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:6-8 NASB).

Dear Friend, it is a special privilege to share your devotional time today.

John's Story: The Last Eyewitness by LaHaye and Jenkins is the story of the relationship of John the Apostle and Jesus. Also, all the books of the Bible that John wrote. The emphasis is on the process of the Revelation spoken by God and written down by John.

John carefully handed the manuscript to Polycarp. I know some of the language the Lord gave me needs clarification. I dare say the scope and supernaturalness of it will astound you. (211)

As Polycarp continued, the church heard the majestic and terrifying language of God Himself, as He revealed to John what was to come. (214)

Failing (in health) rapidly, John dictated the three epistles First, Second and Third John. Less than a month later the beloved apostle John died in his sleep. (1)

This book will give you a new and stronger appreciation for the spoken and written Word of God. It helps to follow the words of the Psalmist. "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Ps. 90:12 NIV).

The longing of my heart this day is to love and serve in such a way that I will hear "Well done good and faithful servant."

Let's claim together the promise of 1 Thessalonians 5:24: "Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass" (NASB).

Let's conclude our worship by singing a verse of **"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. May all who come behind us, find us faithful."*

January 9 — My Father Knows All About Me and Loves Me Still (Ps. 103:13-14)

Psalm 103:13: *"As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;"*

Psalm 103:14: *"for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust."*

Verse 13: "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;"

Notice once again we have the phrase "those who fear him."

"Those who fear him" concludes verse 13, just as it concluded verse 11. In verse 11 we read: "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him." Now in verse 13: "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him."

Verse 13 is an illustration. "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him."

I am reminded of the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15. When the son finally comes to his senses and desires to go home, the Lord is pictured as an old man running to get his arms around that boy and restoring him to all the rights and privileges of sonship.

Job 10:12: "You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit" (NIV).

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).

Ephesians 4:32: "And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you" (NASB).

I remember Howard Hendricks saying in class: "There are 2 things you always want to remember. (1) There is nothing you can ever do to get God to love you any more than He does right now. (2) There is nothing you can ever do to get God to love you less."

Verse 14: "for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust."

In verse 14 we have the statement of reason for the fact that the "father has compassion on his children." There are 2 reasons: (1) "he knows how we are formed" and (2) "he remembers that we are dust."

Because "he knows" and "he remembers" He can love us to the point of being compassionately involved in meeting our needs and graciously forgiving our sins.

Warren Wiersbe said: "Where there is dust, there is potential. Where there is dust, there is opportunity for growth. Continue to yield to Him and His creative process in your life. Ask Him to mold you after His will."

I think it would appropriate for us to reverse the VCR of life and sing that wonderful hymn to the Lord this morning that we sang in our 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 who died Heaven's gate to open wide; He will wash away my sin, Let His little child come in. 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."*

January 10 — Our Ground-time Will Be Brief (Ps. 103:15-16)

Psalm 103:15: *"As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field;"*

Psalm 103:16: *"the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more."*

Verse 15: *"As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field;"*

Verse 16: *"the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more."*

There are 4 things the Lord "knows" and "remembers" about man in verses 15 and 16: (1) "his days are like grass"; (2) "he flourishes like a flower of the field"; (3) "the wind blows over it and it is gone"; and (4) "its place remembers it no more."

I am reminded of Bishop Andrews' prayer: "Abide with us, O Lord, for it is toward evening, and the day of our life is far spent."

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 39:4-6: "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. Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro: He bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it" (NIV).

Psalm 90:10, 12: "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. Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (NIV).

Tommy Nelson said: "Man in his ignorance will *always* be looking and listening for a new thing. He's like a little gerbil trapped on an exercise wheel, wanting to go faster and faster and faster. It's been said that man is the only animal that will accelerate when lost. When a person realizes that he can't understand life, instead of saying, 'Life is wearisome; I cannot find meaning in this life in and of myself,' he just speeds up. He is not satisfied, so he just keeps looking." (*The Problem of Life With God*, 16)

Gandhi said: "There's more to life than increasing its speed."

Let's review and call to mind the 4 things the Lord "knows" and "remembers" about us in these 2 verses we're looking at: (1) "[our] days are like grass"; (2) "[we flourish] like a flower of the field"; (3) "the wind blows over it and it is gone"; and (4) "its place remembers it no more."

The bottom line is life is a temporary trip.

Let's sing a couple of verses of **"A Shelter in the Time of Storm"**: *"The Lord's our Rock, in Him we hide, A Shelter in the time of storm; Secure whatever ill betide; A Shelter in the time of storm. The raging storms may roud us beat, A Shelter in the time of storm; We'll never leave our safe retreat; A Shelter in the time of storm. O, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land, A weary land, a weary land; O, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land, A Shelter in the time of storm."*

January 11 — The Eternal God Brings Love and Righteousness (Ps. 103:17-18)

Psalm 103:17: *"But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children—"*

Psalm 103:18: *"with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts."*

Verse 17: *"But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children—"*

Once again we come to a blessed “But” in the Psalm. Whereas man is mortal, God is immortal. Whereas man is temporary, God is eternal.

This is the third time we have had the phrase “those who fear him.” We saw it back in verse 11 and also in verse 13. Now we have it here in verse 17. “The Lord’s love is with those who fear him.”

According to the Psalmist, the 2 things that will always be there for us are: (1) His “love” and (2) “his righteousness.”

With these 2 gifts from an eternal God, we have nothing to fear, as far as the future is concerned. We are resting in His “love” and we are secure in “his righteousness” and not in our own.

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).

Proverbs 21:21: “He who pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honor” (NIV).

Verse 18: “with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts.”

We learn here that “the Lord’s love is”: (1) “with those who fear him”; (2) “with those who keep his covenant”; and (3) “with those who...remember to obey his precepts.”

Here we have not only the 3-fold key to the Lord’s blessing on our lives, but the 3-fold key to the eternal relationship with Him. What a glorious truth! “The Lord’s love is”: (1) “with those who fear him”; (2) “with those who keep his covenant”; and (3) “with those who...remember to obey his precepts.”

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).

Let’s sing a couple of verses of that wonderful hymn of testimony, **“The Solid Rock”**: *“My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus’ name. When darkness veils His lovely face, I rest on His unchanging grace; In ev’ry high and stormy gale, My anchor holds within the vale. On Christ the solid Rock I stand; All other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand.”*

January 12 — The King is Coming! (Ps. 103:19-20)

Psalm 103:19: *“The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.”*

Psalm 103:20: *“Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.”*

Verse 19: “The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.”

I love the way Eugene Peterson paraphrases this verse: “God has set his throne in heaven; he rules over us all. He’s the King!”

In verse 19 the Lord is on center stage. There are 2 things said about Him: (1) “The Lord has established his throne in heaven” and (2) “his kingdom rules over all.”

What we are saying is “his throne [is] in heaven” and “his kingdom” is universal.

Notice again that important word “all” in verse 19. This reminds me of the words of the resurrected Jesus in 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).

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).

The ultimate fulfillment of that is seen in Revelation 19:6-7: “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. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready’” (NASB).

Warren Wiersbe said: “No matter how difficult your situation may be today, no matter how discouraging the news, you can still lean on this: ‘The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all’...”

Carolyn Custis James in her book *When Life and Beliefs Collide* says: “Even in the worst moments, God’s scepter never slips from his hand.” (91)

Bishop Andrewes said: “Do Thou, o Lord, I beseech Thee, in thine unspeakable loving affection so take order concerning me and so dispose, as thou knowest to be best liking unto Thee and most expedient for me.”

Verse 20: “Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.”

Now the Psalmist returns to the word “Praise.” We had it occur 3 times back in verses 1 and 2. Now he is enlisting the “angels” in this great dramatic chorus and climax to this Psalm: “Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones.”

They are characterized as “angels” and “mighty ones.” They are characterized in 2 ways. They “do his bidding” and “obey his word.”

They are quick to carry out His will and they are quick to “obey his word.”

This serves as a fine example for us to be quick to do His will and also to be quick to “obey his word.”

I find myself with this verse in mind singing those phrases from that great old hymn “Holy, Holy, Is What the Angels Sing”: “Holy, holy is what the angels sing, And I expect to help them make the courts of heaven ring; But when I sing redemption’s story, they shall fold their wings, For angels never felt the joy that our salvation brings.”

Join me in singing the last couple of verses of **“The Solid Rock”**: *“His oath, His covenant, His blood Support me in the whelming flood; When all around my soul gives way He then is all my hope and stay. When He shall come with trumpet sound, O may I then in Him be found; Dressed in His righteousness alone, Faultless to stand before the throne. On Christ the solid Rock I stand; All other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand.”*

January 13 — Praise the Lord, O My Soul! (Ps. 103:21-22)

Psalm 103:21: “Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.”

Psalm 103:22: “Praise the Lord, all his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the Lord, O my soul.”

Verse 21: “Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.”

You can tell the Psalmist has reached a state of sheer ecstasy and joy. He is speaking again with the word “all” several times. Verse 19: “his kingdom rules over all.” Verse 21: “all his heavenly hosts.”

Praise is the language of sinners set free!

I pray every morning the littler prayer of Lancelot Andrews: “Let us all be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him. As for my soul, it shall be satisfied, even as it were with marrow and fatness. Therefore, let my mouth be filled with Thy praise, that I may sing of Thy glory and honor all the day long. This is the happiness of the four creatures in the revelation. They rest not day and night saying, ‘Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God Almighty! Which was and is and is to come!’”

Revelation 19:4-5: “And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, ‘Amen. Hallelujah!’ And a voice came from the throne, saying, ‘Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great’” (NASB).

One of the beautiful things about learning the discipline of praise and beginning the day with an attitude of gratitude is that it spills over and changes so much in the marriage relationship. When we turn positive and speak words of affirmation and encouragement, we have learned how to be a blessing to others by truly praising them.

Dave and Claudia Arp give us some practical tips for praising one another: (1) Be specific. Describe, don’t evaluate. (2) Be sincere, avoid exaggeration. (3) Don’t overlook written praise. (4) Give a gift for no reason at all. (5) Plan a special person’s party. (6) Praise often. (Logos Library Systems)

Verse 22: “Praise the Lord, all his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the Lord, O my soul.”

Once again the Psalmist returns to the word “all”: “all his works everywhere in his dominion.” We have learned “his kingdom rules over all” back in verse 19. The Psalmist then ends the psalm the way he started: “Praise the Lord, O my soul.” Wow! What a choir!

Don Wyrzten prays: “*I praise You and thank You, O Lord, for Your sovereignty and authority over all creation. I want to join the heavenly hosts in praising Your name today. Teach me some ‘melodious sonnet.’*”

Join me in singing a couple of verses of “**All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name**”: “*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! O that with yonder sacred throne 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!*”

January 14 — To Your Name Be the Glory! (Ps. 115:1-2)

Psalm 115:1: “*Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.*”

Psalm 115:2: “*Why do the nations say, ‘Where is their God?’*”

What a joy to be studying one of the psalms that concluded the Lord’s Supper. Psalms 115-118 were sung at the conclusion of the celebration. Jesus sang this psalm with His disciples just before they headed to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Verse 1: “Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.”

“Not to us, O Lord, not to us” because Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe.

The reason for the “glory” is 2-fold: (1) “because of your love” and (2) “because of your...faithfulness.”

The Lord’s love never changes and His faithfulness never fails.

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).

Ephesians 2:8-9: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast” (NASB).

Stewart Perowne says: “NOT UNTO US. The repetition of the words expresses the more vividly the deep sense of unworthiness, the unfeigned humility which claims nothing for itself.”

Verse 2: “Why do the nations say, ‘Where is their God?’”

Don Wyrzten says: “While heathen nations ask, ‘Where is their God?’ our Lord is going about doing whatever He pleases.”

I find myself singing “**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. O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood! To ev’ry believer the promise of God; The vilest offender who truly believes, That moment from Jesus a pardon receives. 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.*”

January 15 — We Will Understand It Better By & By (Donna)

I do not understand. At times we just plain cannot understand the happenings in the world, the lives of those we love or in our own personal lives. We all encounter situations that cause us to admit to God I do not understand. We struggle over difficult circumstances like death, accidents, or disasters.

Recently I was struggling with just such a circumstance. During my prayer time I admitted to the Lord that I did not understand what had happened. I was seeking the Lord with “why” on my mind and in my heart.

The Lord gave me a verse a few minutes later while reading the Scriptures during my devotional time.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding” (Prov. 3:5).

God spoke to me so powerfully from His Word. This verse tells us we are not to lean or depend on our own human understanding.

I felt the Lord gently reminding me to trust Him. Not only to trust Him, but to whole heartedly trust Him.

At that moment I felt God meeting me in my questioning and calling me to trust. He is so trustworthy and my heart responded to our Heavenly Father. I trust You. I still do not understand, but that is not for me. My responsibility is to trust. This was an opportunity to trust God.

We cannot explain God or understand the happenings around us. That is not for us. We are to trust.

Are you struggling? Are you questioning happenings around you? Are circumstances in your life or the life of a loved one unexplainable?

Trust.

January 16 — Whatever Pleases Him (Ps. 115:3-4)

Psalm 115: 3: *“Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.”*

Psalm 115:4: *“But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men.”*

Verse 3: “Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.”

I love the water Eugene H. Peterson paraphrases verse 3: “Our God is in heaven doing whatever he wants to do.”

Psalm 135:6: “The Lord does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths” (NIV).

Job 23:13: “But he stands alone, and who can oppose him? He does whatever he pleases” (NIV).

“Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.” Isaiah 53:10 tells us it pleased the Father to crush him.

Ephesians 5:10: “trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord” (NASB).

Ephesians 5:17: “So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (NASB).

David Jeremiah says: “We don’t need a convenient, compact god. We need the One who causes us to fall upon our knees, who leaves us speechless, who makes our eyes shine with His fire and causes us to depart as changed persons. And we need that God every moment of every day.” (*My Heart’s Desire*, 18).

Romans 12:1-2: “With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him. Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity” (Phillips).

Charles Swindoll says: “When we take this to the ultimate future for humanity, God is sovereignly in charge. One second after they die, the men and women who have rejected and resisted the Lord for years will step into eternity. One second . . . and they will be totally at a loss to determine their future. God’s sovereignty steps over their lives and sets forth His decree, ‘That God may be all in all.’” (*The Mystery of God’s Will*, 73).

Verse 4: “But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men.”

We have “Our God” in verse 3 and “their idols” in verse 4.

Psalm 135:15-18: “The idols of the nations are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear, nor is there breath in their mouths. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them” (NIV).

Psalm 96:5: “For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens” (NIV).

These “idols” are described in 3 ways in verse 4: (1) “silver”; (2) “gold”; and (3) “made by the hands of men.”

Warren Wiersbe says: “‘Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands’ (v. 4). How true that is today also. Many people worship silver and gold as their god. They think money can do anything.

We do need money for some of the practical things in life. But what good are the things that money can buy if you don't have the things that money *can't* buy?"

Please join me in singing a couple of verses of **"My Wonderful Lord"**: *"I have found a deep peace that I never had know And a joy this world could not afford Since I yielded control of my body and soul To my wonderful, wonderful Lord. I desire that my life shall be ordered by Thee, That my will be in perfect accord With Thine own sov'reign will, Thy desires to fulfill, My wonderful, wonderful Lord. My wonderful Lord, my wonderful Lord, By angels and seraphs in heaven adored! I bow at Thy shrine, my Saviour divine, My wonderful, wonderful Lord."*

January 17 — Little Children Guard Yourselves from Idols—1 John 5:21 (Ps. 115:5-6)

Psalm 115: 5: *"They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see;"*

Psalm 115:6: *"they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell;"*

Before we look at the verses for this morning, let's consider what the dictionary defines as idol: (1) an image used an object of worship, a false god; (2) one that is adored, often blindly or excessively; and (3) something visible but without substance.

Let's take a moment to reflect on what the scripture has to say about idolatry.

Exodus 20:3-4: "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below" (NIV).

Judges 17:5-6: "Now this man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and some idols and installed one of his sons as his priest. In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit" (NIV).

Verse 5: *"They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see;"*

The Psalmist in the verses we are considering this morning is going to outline for us 4 things which the idols cannot do.

1. "They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes."

2. "but they cannot see."

Verse 6: *"they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell;"*

So we continue on our outline to 3 and 4.

3. "they have ears, but cannot hear."

4. "noses, but they cannot smell."

Warren Wiersbe says: "The psalmist describes the idols and the pointlessness of worshipping them. 'They have mouths, but they do not speak [no promises]; eyes they have but do not see [no protection]; they have ears but they do not hear [no prayer]; noses they have, but they do not smell [no praise]..."

1 Peter 4:3: "For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, arousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries" (NASB).

1 Corinthians 10:14: "Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry" (NASB).

Lord, since my heart is where my treasure is, I'm setting my heart on things above, not on things on the earth.

Please join me in singing the first verse of **"He Lives"**: *"I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today; I know that He is living, what ever men may say; I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer, And just the time I need Him, He's always near. He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way. He lives, He lives, salvation to impart, You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart."*

January 18 — Powerless and Senseless is the Gods They Worship (Ps. 115:7-8)

Psalm 115:7: *"they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats."*

Psalm 115:8: *"Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them."*

Verse 7: *"they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats."*

Here in verse 7 we continue with our outline. There were 4 things that were said about idols in verses 5 and 6: (1) "They have mouths but cannot speak"; (2) "eyes but they cannot see"; (3) "they have ears, but cannot hear"; (4) "noses, but they cannot smell."

Now here in verse 7 we have: (5) "hands, but cannot feel"; (6) "feet, but they cannot walk"; and (7) "nor can they utter a sound with their throats."

William Plumer said: "Verses 5-7 contain a very remarkable instance of ridicule without unfairness. Every sentence is just and candid. There is no exaggeration, no coloring."

Verse 8: "Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them."

Whether you are actually the one who makes them or the one who trusts in them, everyone will be like them.

Warren Wiersbe says: "We become like the god we worship. Those who worship silver and gold become like that—dead, lifeless and hard. Many people are making a god of their own image. But God made us in His image, and He wants us to have an active faith in Him."

Isaiah 44:9: "All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless. Those who would speak up for them are blind; they are ignorant, to their own shame" (NIV).

James Boice said: "Idols not only mislead their worshipers, but they also debase them, which is why this section closes by saying, 'Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them' (v. 8). It means that human beings are drawn downward, not upward, by false gods."

To the Lord, idolatry is spiritual adultery. Idolatry is anything that cools your desire for Christ. Idols can be anything that steals the love that rightly belongs to the Lord."

Hunting, fishing, cars, computers, homes, hundred dollar bills, anything that would take that special place that belongs to the Lord and to the Lord alone is an idol.

The Psalmist says here in verse 8: "those who make them will be like them."

The same thing is true of those who walk intimately with the Lord. We are progressively becoming more like Him.

My prayer this morning is: "Spirit of the Living God, make me more like my precious Savior! Do in me that good work that makes me more Christlike!"

William Cowper said: "The dearest idol I have known, Whate'er that idol be, Help me to tear it from thy throne, And worship only thee."

Jonah 2:8: "Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs" (NIV).

Jesus is all I'll ever want. Jesus is all I'll ever need. Jesus is all I'll ever have. He is more than enough!

Join me in singing verses 2 and 3 of **"He Lives"**: *"In all the world around me I see His loving care, And tho' my heart grows weary, never will despair; I know that he is leading thro' all the stormy blast, The day of His appearing will come at last. Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian, lift up your voice and sing Eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ the King! The Hope of all who seek Him, the Help of all who find, None other is so loving, so good and kind. He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way. He lives, He lives, salvation to impart, You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart."*

January 19 — Trust in the Lord is the Key (Ps. 115:9-11)

Psalm 115:9: "O house of Israel, trust in the Lord—he is their help and shield."

Psalm 115:10: "O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord—he is their help and shield."

Psalm 115:11: "You who fear him, trust in the Lord—he is their help and shield."

In these 3 verses we consider this morning, we are going to have the same phrase in all 3 verses: "trust in the Lord."

I found myself meditating on the Lord's words in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6. In verses 19-21 He says: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (NASB).

Then in Matthew 6:33-34 we read: “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).

Verse 9: “O house of Israel, trust in the Lord—he is their help and shield.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “The psalmist exhorted **Israel** to **trust in the LORD**, not in idols, for only He can protect them—as **their Help...and Shield...**” (876)

Psalm 33:20-22: “We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in you” (NIV).

Verse 10: “O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord—he is their help and shield.”

You will notice in these 3 verses that they are all the same except for the groups being addressed. We see in verse 9 the “house of Israel.” In verse 10 we have the “house of Aaron” or the religious leaders, priests. In verse 11 we will see “You who fear him” which is a message to all believers.

The message is the same to all 3: “trust in the Lord—he is their help and shield.”

Verse 11: “You who fear him, trust in the Lord—he is their help and shield.”

If you remember, to fear God is to respect Him, to release our wills to Him, to relate to Him in our prayers, and to repent of our sin.

Norman Macleod said these words: “Courage, brother! do not stumble, Though thy path be dark as night; There’s a star to guide the humble, Trust in God and do the right.” (Parson’s Technology)

It seems very appropriate this morning for us to sing a couple of verses of **“Only Trust Him”**:
“Come, ev’ry soul by sin oppressed, There’s mercy with the Lord, And He will surely give you rest By trusting in His Word. Come, then, and join this holy band, And on to glory go, To dwell in that celestial land, Where joys immortal flow. Only trust Him, only trust Him, only trust Him now; He will save you, He will save you, He will save you now.”

January 20 — The Lord is in the Business of Blessing (Ps. 115:12-13)

Psalm 115:12: *“The Lord remembers us and will bless us: He will bless the house of Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron,”*

Psalm 115:13: *“he will bless those who fear the Lord—small and great alike.”*

Verse 12: “The Lord remembers us and will bless us: He will bless the house of Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron,”

In the previous verses we have learned that “Israel,” “the house of Aaron,” and “those who fear him” need to “trust in the Lord.” When they do that, “he is their help and shield.”

Now he is going to address the same 3 groups again in verses 12 and 13. The Lord is going to do 2 things for these 3 groups. The Lord is going to (1) “remember us” and “bless us.” What else could we ask for? We have someone to be there to “help” us, to “shield” us, to “remember” us, and to “bless us.”

Verse 13: “he will bless those who fear the Lord—small and great alike.”

The same 3 groups that were mentioned in verse 9-11 are mentioned here in verses 12 and 13. “He will bless” (1) “the house of Israel”; (2) “the house of Aaron”; and (3) “those who fear the Lord.”

There are 4 wonderful things the Lord will do for those who trust in Him. He will: (1) be their “help”; (2) be their “shield”; (3) “remember” them; and (4) “bless them.”

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 5:12: “For surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield” (NIV).

Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (NASB).

I am reminded of the words of Jesus, that blessing comes to the poor in spirit, to those who mourn, to the gentle, to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, to the merciful, to the pure in heart, and to the peace makers.

My cry to you this morning O Lord is the same cry of Jabez as he cried out to the God of Israel, “O that You would bless me!”

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).

Please join me in singing a couple of verses of “**There Shall Be Showers of Blessing**”: *“There shall be showers of blessing: Send them upon us, O Lord; Grant to us now a refreshing, Come, and now honor Thy Word. There shall be showers of blessing: Oh, that today they might fall, Now as to God we’re confessing, Now as on Jesus we call! Showers of blessing, Showers of blessing we need mercy drops round us are falling, But for the showers we plead.”*

January 21 — Prayer for Bounty and Blessing (Ps. 115:14-15)

Psalm 115:14: “May the Lord make you increase, both you and your children.”

Psalm 115:15: “May you be blessed by the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.”

As we turn our attention to verses 14 and 15, the Psalmist turns to prayer. He makes 2 requests: (1) verse 14—for bounty; and (2) verse 15—for blessing.

Verse 14: “May the Lord make you increase, both you and your children.”

Request #1: “May the Lord make you increase, both you and your children.”

Patrick and Lowth say: “Nor will he grant you only a single blessing, by sending a present deliverance; but heap his benefits, and multiply his mercies, upon you; and upon all those that shall succeed you.”

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

Psalm 13:5-6: “But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me” (NIV).

Ephesians 3:20-21: “Now to him who by his power within us is able to do far more than we ever dare to ask or imagine—to him be glory in the Church through Jesus Christ for ever and ever, amen!” (Phillips).

Kris Lundgaard says: If every backward step we took on the way to heaven were unrecoverable, we’d all go up in smoke! If God marked all our slips and stumbles, ‘O Lord, who could stand?’ (Psalm 130:3). If we didn’t have help from our failures *every day*, we’d be in a spiritual free fall without a parachute.” (*Through the Looking Glass*, 191)

Verse 15: “May you be blessed by the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.”

In verse 14 we had request #1: “May the Lord make you increase, both you and your children.”

Now, here in verse 15, we have request #2: “May you be blessed by the Lord.”

Let’s sit at the feet of a couple of the minor prophets for a moment.

Joel 2:12: “‘Even now,’ declares the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning’” (NIV).

Joel 2:14: “Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing...” (NIV).

Malachi 3:10: “‘...Test me in this,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it’” (NIV).

Join me in singing verses 1 and 2 of the hymn we sang yesterday, “**There Shall Be Showers of Blessing**”: *“There shall be showers of blessing: This is the promise of love; There shall be seasons refreshing, Sent from the Saviour above. There shall be showers of blessing: Precious reviving again; Over the hills and the valleys, Sound of abundance of rain. Showers of blessing, Showers of blessing we need mercy drops round us are falling, But for the showers we plead.”*

January 22 — It’s All in the Mind—Or is It? (Mark)

During my stint in seminary I had what was called a Christian Service Assignment. I was to lead a Sunday morning worship service in a rest home twice a month. As the weeks went by I had many interesting experiences.

Probably my most memorable Sunday was a time I was speaking from Psalm 23. I decided to read the entire Psalm first, then go back and make some points. I opened my Bible and read the first line, “The Lord is my Shepherd,” but before I could catch my breath I heard a loud, “I SHALL NOT WANT!” I didn’t know whether to read that line or not, so I decided to skip it, since it had already been said. I started on the next verse, “He makes me...” and before I could finish the sentence I heard, “LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES!” (I hadn’t planned on this being a responsive reading, but you have to be flexible, right?) Well, this went on several more times, and I figured out my responder was Dorothy. Finally I heard one of the other guests say, “Dorothy, would you be quiet, and let this young man finish?”

Well, things went along as normal for the rest of the time, but I have never forgotten Dorothy. Dorothy was an elderly lady who was confined to a wheelchair, and was almost blind. Dorothy could not read anything, no matter how large the print. Her key was memorization. Sometime back in Dorothy’s younger years she had set her mind to memorize Scripture. I’m sure she never thought there would be a time when she could not read the Bible on her own, and would need to glean comfort and hope from God’s Word in her memory, but that time had come for her.

Bible memorization is something we talk a lot about, but do very little. It is ironic that we memorize phone numbers, addresses, sports statistics, recipes, and a host of other information that borders on useless. So often we do so almost automatically and with great ease, but when it comes to putting to memory the very words of God we say to others and ourselves, “Oh, I just can’t memorize.” We need to change that little word “can’t” to “won’t.”

Dorothy, in her earlier years, had put into practice: “*Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you....*” *Colossians 3:16*

If you put a favorite verse at the base of your computer monitor, after a month you will have it memorized. Do that for twelve months, you will have twelve verses memorized in one year!

Psalm 119:9, 11: “How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (NIV).

Matthew 4:4: “But He answered and said, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God”’” (NASB).

January 23 — What a Gift! (Ps. 115:16)

Psalm 115:16: “*The highest heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth he has given to man.*”

Verse 16: “The highest heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth he has given to man.”

Try to imagine in your heart this morning what the Lord felt as He was singing this psalm in the upper room just hours before Calvary.

When He got to the Garden of Gethsemane, He asked the Lord to give Him back the glory that He had with Him.

God is a giving God. He’s not only given us this wonderful world, but the greatest gift of all was the gift of His Son. John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...” (NASB).

Paul was so overwhelmed by that gift he said in 2 Corinthians 9:15: “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” (NASB).

In contrast to the idols that can give us nothing, our God is alive and He has given us a wonderful gift in this world which we live. I’m sure you, along with many others, are facing this day with the depressing thought that you can’t be a candidate for blessing in the present because of the past.

Our Daily Bread says: “Brooding over the past paralyzes the present and bankrupts the future.” (Dec. 30, 2002)

Oswald Chambers said: “Never be afraid when God brings back the past. Let memory have its way. It is a minister of God with its rebuke and chastisement and sorrow. God will turn the ‘might have been’ into a wonderful culture [source of nourishment and growth] for the future.” (*Our Daily Bread*, Dec. 30, 2002).

Listen to Jonathan Edwards' resolutions: (1) Resolved, to live with all my might while I do live. (2) Resolved, never to lose one moment of time, to improve it in the most profitable way I can. (3) Resolved, never to do anything which I should despise or think meanly of in another. (4) Resolved, never to do anything out of revenge. (5) Resolved, never to do anything which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.

I think with these awesome words we ought to take our hymnals and sing the first couple of 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 throughout the universe displayed! When thru the woods and forest glades I wander and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees, When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze, 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!*"

January 24 — Praise the Lord Now and Forever! (Ps. 115:17-18)

Psalm 115:17: "*It is not the dead who praise the Lord, those who go down to silence;*"

Psalm 115:18: "*it is we who extol the Lord, both now and forevermore. Praise the Lord.*"

Verse 17: "It is not the dead who praise the Lord, those who go down to silence;"

Don Wyrzten raises the question: "Why don't we sing? The Maker of heaven and earth has given us everything to delight us, but so many people move through the measure of their days like marionettes, with painted smiles and no music in their hearts."

Praise is a major priority to our blessed Lord. That's why in the middle of the 66 books we have 150 psalms for us to use to give praise to our God.

Verse 18: "it is we who extol the Lord, both now and forevermore. Praise the Lord."

C. H. Spurgeon said: "Though the dead cannot, and the wicked will not, and the careless do not praise God, yet we will shout 'Hallelujah' for ever and ever. Amen."

David Jeremiah says: "For those of a bent 'too serious' for such frivolities as music, the fact remains that there are 575 references to praise, singing, and music in the Bible." (*My Heart's Desire*, 90) You can't imagine hell with music or heaven without it!

Kris Lundgaard says: "If your thoughts are prisoners of your flesh or can't rise above earthly needs, you won't be able to hold on to a sense of the love of Christ and its glory. High thoughts of his love can't live in the same mind with sewer-dwelling thoughts any more than a mouse can live in the same cage with a boa constrictor. Just as the serpent devours the rodents, a mind mesmerized by worldliness eats up the first feeble attempt to gaze on the Son." (*Through the Looking Glass*, 67)

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).

Let's conclude our devotional time by singing verses 3 and 4 of "**How Great Thou Art!**": "*And when I think that God, His Son not sparing, Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in—That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing, He bled and died to take away my sin! When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart! Then I shall bow in humble adoration And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art! 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!*"

January 25 — I Love the Lord! (Ps. 116:1-2)

Psalm 116:1: "*I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy.*"

Psalm 116:2: "*Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live.*"

Psalm 116 is another one of those psalms which the Lord sang in the upper room the night before He was crucified. Wouldn't you have loved to hear the Lord speak? Wouldn't you have loved to hear the Lord sing?

C. H. Spurgeon said of this psalm: “*Since our divine Master sang this hymn, we can hardly err in seeing here words to which he could set his seal,—words in a measure descriptive of his own experience; but upon this we will not enlarge, as in the notes we have indicated how the Psalm has been understood by those who love to find their Lord in every line.*”

Verse 1: “I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy.”

The Psalmist in these 19 verses mentions “the Lord” 34 times and himself 36 times. There are 3 reasons stated in these first 2 verses as to why the Psalmist loves the Lord: (1) “he heard my voice”; (2) “he heard my cry for mercy”; and (3) “he turned his ear to me.”

When was the last time that you said “I love You Lord”?

It reminds me of an elderly man who was having problems in his marriage. He was asked if he had told his wife that he loved her and he said “I told her 25 years ago and it still stands until I revoke it!”

Perhaps it’s been that long since you have really told the Lord from the bottom of your heart how much you love Him. I think it would be a good idea for you to do that this morning.

I remember the story of a young boy with cerebral palsy by the name of Billy who went to the junior high camp. It came time for Billy to give the devotions in the cabin with the other boys. It took Billy almost 5 minutes to say 7 words: “Jesus...loves me...and I...love Jesus.”

A revival broke out in that camp after Billy’s short testimony.

“I love the Lord”: (1) “he heard my voice” and (2) “he heard my cry for mercy.” This is a song that David wrote during the time of Absalom’s rebellion and taking the kingdom from his father.

Verse 2: “Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live.”

Back in verse 1 we had 2 reasons why he loved the Lord: (1) “he heard my voice” and (2) “he heard my cry for mercy.” Now we have: (3) “he turned his ear to me.”

Because the Lord has done these 3 wonderful things for the Psalmist, he resolves: “I will call on him as long as I live.” I really don’t need to go anywhere else.

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

Let’s join together in singing that contemporary worship song “**I Love You, Lord**”: “*I love You, Lord, and I lift my voice To worship You. O my soul, rejoice! Take joy, my King, in what You hear; May it be a sweet, sweet sound in Your ear.*”

January 26 — I Almost Died (Ps. 116:3-4)

Psalm 116:3: “*The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.*”

Psalm 116:4: “*Then I called on the name of the Lord: ‘O Lord, save me!’*”

Verse 3: “The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.”

The 3 key words are: (1) “entangled”; (2) “came upon”; and (3) “overcome.”

“The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.”

The Psalmist is now making a statement as to why he was so desperately in need of help. Jesus sang this song knowing that tomorrow was the day. Judas had already gone to betray Him.

The words of the Psalmist sound similar to the prayers of Jonah in the belly of the fish. Jonah 2:5: “The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head” (NIV).

Many of the psalms are messianic in nature and this is certainly a messianic picture of Christ upon the cross.

Ron Allen said: “What must have been going through the mind of our Lord as he said these words that night! ... The words of this psalm emboldened him for the raw reality of death ahead and encouraged him with the sweet wonder of victory over the enemy of us all. Was it not in part because of the teaching of this psalm in his life that he, ‘for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame’ (Hebrews 12:2).”

I'm sure there are many who are reading this that could say "Been there. Done that. And got the scars."

Verse 4: "Then I called on the name of the Lord: 'O Lord, save me!'"

The Psalmist is saying: "When these 3 things happened in my life, it was then that I responded by calling on the name of the Lord. My prayer was very brief, 'O Lord, save me!'"

It reminds me of the experience of Peter walking on the water toward the Lord in Matthew 14: "But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, 'Lord, save me!'" (14:30 NASB).

If we just stay focused on the Lord, everything is going to be just fine.

Isaiah 26:3: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee" (KJV).

I feel it would be good for us to express our full trust in the Lord in these kind of overwhelming circumstances by singing **"Beyond the Sunset"**: *"Beyond the sunset, O blissful morning, When with our Saviour, heav'n is begun. Earth's tolling ended, O glorious dawning; Beyond the sunset, when day is done. Beyond the sunset a hand will guide me To God, the Father, whom I adore; His glorious presence, His words of welcome, Will be my portion on that fair shore. Beyond the sunset O glad reunion, With our dear loved ones who've gone before; In that fair homeland we'll know no parting, Beyond the sunset, forever more!"*

January 27 — The Lord Saved Me (Ps. 116:5-6)

Psalm 116:5: "The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion."

Psalm 116:6: "The Lord protects the simplehearted; when I was in great need, he saved me."

Verse 5: "The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion."

These characteristics remind us of Exodus 34:6 as Moses requested to see the Lord: "And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness'" (NIV).

Here the Psalmist describes the Lord in 3 ways. He is: (1) "gracious"; (2) "righteous"; and (3) "full of compassion."

Anne Graham Lotz said: "You and I need to learn to interpret our circumstances by His love, not interpret His love by our circumstances!" (*Just Give Me Jesus*, 203).

Is there anything in your life this morning that you dread or are concerned about? That if you meet those circumstances today, you will not find an adequate Lord? And that one of these 3 words will prove His adequacy? He is "gracious and righteous...[and] full of compassion." O what a great God we have! What joy fills our hearts as we're drawn to Him who is "gracious," who is "righteous," who is "full of compassion."

Because the Lord is gracious, righteous, and full of compassion, the Lord reached down and made a rescue and spared the life of David in this situation.

Verse 6: "The Lord protects the simplehearted; when I was in great need, he saved me."

Here in verse 6 the Lord does 2 things. He (1) "protects" and (2) "saved."

The way "The Lord protects" is He is constantly watching over us.

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).

Psalm 19:7: "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple" (NIV).

C.H. Spurgeon said: "simple though I was, the Lord did not pass me by. Though reduced in circumstances, slandered in character, depressed in spirit, and sick in body, the Lord helped me."

Psalm 34:6: "This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles" (NIV).

Chip Ingram says: "Getting the big picture will help us endure the raw deal—the lost relationship, the lost money, the gossip, the betrayal, and the painful disappointments that come our way in this fallen world—without destroying our lives and turning us into bitter, vengeful people." (*I Am With You Always*, 32)

I find myself praying with Bishop Andrewes: "...Abide with us, o Lord, for it is toward evening, and the day of our life is far spent."

In answer to my cry, I find myself singing **"Love Lifted Me"**: *"I was sinking deep in sin, Far from the peaceful shore, Very deeply stained within, Sinking to rise no more; But the master of the sea Heard my despairing cry, From the waters lifted me, Now safe am I. Souls in danger, look above, Jesus completely saves; he will lift you by His love Out of the angry waves. He's the Master of the sea, Billows His will obey; He your Saviour wants to be, Be saved today. Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else could help, Love lifted me."*

January 28 — I Am Resting in the Lord (Ps. 116:7)

Psalm 116:7: *"Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the Lord has been good to you."*

Verse 7: "Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the Lord has been good to you."

In this psalm David is once more talking to himself.

In Psalm 42:5 he is doing the same thing: "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" (NIV). Then David repeats this same phrase in Psalm 42:11 and 43:5. David is saying in this verse to himself that he needs to get back to that place of rest where he once was. "[To] Be at rest once more."

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).

You will notice at the conclusion of verse 7 he gives the reason for commanding himself to "Be at rest once more, O my soul": "for the Lord has been good to you."

Eugene Peterson paraphrases that last phrase: "God has showered you with blessings."

Hebrews 4:1 gives us a warning: "Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it" (NASB).

The writer to the book of Hebrews warns his listeners: "... 'Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts...' " (NASB).

Hebrews 4:10: "For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His" (NASB).

Hebrews 4:16: "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).

Let's answer the Lord with honesty and sincerity by singing Hudson Taylor's hymn **"Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting"**: *"Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart. Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee, And Thy beauty fills my soul, for by Thy transforming power, Thou has made me whole. O, how great Thy loving kindness, Vaster, broader than the sea! O how marvelous Thy goodness, Lavished all on me! Yes, I rest in Thee Beloved, Know what wealth of grace is Thine, Know Thy certainty of promise, And have made it mine. Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart."*

January 29 — Let Me Take Care of It! (Donna)

"What is impossible with men is possible with God" (Luke 18:27).

Have you ever had a laugh with the Lord? Years ago while I was in college I walked by a student sitting on the lawn. She was laughing. I stopped and asked her why she was laughing. My fellow student was thinking how much she would like a package of Life Savers but was a nickel short. Realizing she was not going to be able to go to the student center and get a roll of Life Savers she decided to sit down on the lawn and enjoy the beautiful day. When she sat down on the grass, something caught her eye, a nickel!! She told me "I was just sitting here laughing at God's goodness before I go and buy a package of Life Savers."

"Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing. Sarah laughed to herself, saying, 'After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?' And

the LORD said to Abraham, ‘Why did Sarah laugh, saying, “Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?” **Is anything too difficult for the LORD?**’” (Gen. 18:11-14).

While teaching some children this story of Abraham and Sarah having a baby when Sarah was in her 90s and Abraham 100, I asked the kids if they knew anyone in their 90s. Three girls Chloe, Holland and Gabbi, who were related, told me their Great Grandma was in her 90s. I asked the kids what they would do if they went to visit their Great Grandma and she told them that she was pregnant and going to have a baby! All three of them did not answer, they just started laughing. I love it when the Lord gives a perfect illustration of the story. Your laughter is the same thing Sarah did in our story today. Caught their attention!!

Okay let's get real. I love Genesis 18:14 – Is anything too difficult for the Lord? If the Lord could make it so a 100 year old man and a 90 year old woman send cards stating “It's a boy!”, there truly is nothing too difficult for the Lord.

What are you facing or going through? Nothing is too difficult for the Lord!

Get an index card and write Luke 18:27 on it. “What is impossible with men is possible with God.”

The more impossible the circumstance or situation the greater your laughter will be when God does His work!!

January 30 — I Am Walking Before the Lord (Ps. 116:8-9)

Psalm 116:8: “*For you, O Lord, have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling,*”

Psalm 116:9: “*that I may walk before the Lord in the land of the living.*”

Verse 8: “For you, O Lord, have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.”

Back in verse 7 the Psalmist commanded himself to “be at rest once more.” Now the reason for that was “for the Lord has been good to you.” Now in verse 8 he gives us the reason as to how the “Lord has been good” to him. It is a 3-fold reason. “For you, O Lord”: (1) “have delivered my soul from death”; (2) “my eyes from tears”; and (3) “my feet from stumbling.”

Lord, You have given me life, joy, and victory!

C.H. Spurgeon said: “Death is vanquished, tears are dried, and fears are banished when the Lord is near.”

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).

Verse 9: “that I may walk before the Lord in the land of the living.”

Lord, You've given me life and joy and victory. Now the purpose behind that deliverance is “That I may walk before the Lord in the land of the living.”

Don Wyrzten says: “A certain responsibility accompanies great deliverance. For the rest of his life this psalmist won't forget God's loving mercy. Adversity has enriched his life. Suffering has purged him of superficiality. Like Job, he can say, ‘But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold’ (Job. 23:10).”

It's seems appropriate that we sing verses 3 and 4 of “**Jesus, I Am Resting, Resting**” to conclude our meditation: “*Simply trusting Thee, Lord Jesus, I behold Thee as Thou art, And Thy love, so pure, so changeless, Satisfies my heart; Satisfies its deepest longings, Meets, supplies its every need, Compasseth me round with blessings: Thine is love indeed! Ever lift Thy face upon me As I work and wait for Thee; Resting 'neath Thy smile, Lord Jesus, Earth's dark shadows flee. Brightness of my Father's glory, Sunshine of my Father's face, Keep me ever trusting, resting, Fill me with Thy grace. Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart.*”

January 31 — When You are Hurting (Ps. 116:10-11)

Psalm 116:10: “*I believed; therefore I said, ‘I am greatly afflicted.’*”

Psalm 116:11: “*And in my dismay I said, ‘All men are liars.’*”

Verse 10: “I believed; therefore I said, ‘I am greatly afflicted.’”

The Psalmist is saying: “I believed that I would walk before the Lord in the land of the living and it has come true.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “Faced with certain death, he knew that God was trustworthy, so he cried out to Him.” (877)

Ron Allen says: “The apostle Paul understood that Psalm 116 prophesied the hope of Messiah in his own resurrection. Paul quotes Psalm 116:10 in 2 Corinthians 4:13-15: ‘It is written: “I believed; therefore I have spoken.” With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.’ The words of this psalm, therefore, give not only the hope of Jesus for his life beyond death; this psalm is designed to give us confidence for life beyond the grave as well.”

Chip Ingram says: “God knew what I was going through. He knew what needed to happen to me. All through that difficult process, God was intimately involved in working out his plan for my life. God knows you too. He is orchestrating everything in your life, even the very difficult things. Everything God allows happens for your ultimate benefit. He’s on your team. Therefore, he can be trusted. And that trust begins with our accepting by faith that what God has said about us is true.” (*I Am With You Always*, 101-102)

Verse 11: “And in my dismay I said, ‘All men are liars.’”

When you look at the concluding episodes in the life of the Lord Jesus and the Apostle Paul, this statement is certainly true in the hour of their need. They both had to stand alone.

When God turns up the heat in our lives, everybody wants to flee.

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” (NIV).

Lisa Beamer, whose husband lost his life on United Flight 93, gives this testimony: “‘I try to do what’s right, whatever the consequences,’ Lisa said. ‘You can’t be critical of anyone who is grieving. They don’t act the way they would under normal circumstances. You have to give them a grace period, to do what they need to do, and hope they come out healthier and stronger than they were to begin with.’” (Jerry Longman, *Among the Heroes*, 244-5)

It seems most appropriate that we conclude our devotional time this morning by singing “**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. Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on When we shall be forever with the Lord, When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone, Sorrow forgot, love’s purest joys restored. Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past, All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.”*

February 1 — A Great Question (Ps. 116:12)

Psalm 116:12: “How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?”

Verse 12: “How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?”

With an attitude of gratitude, the Psalmist asks a great question: “How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?”

I love the way Eugene Peterson paraphrases this verse: “What can I give back to God for the blessings he’s poured out on me?”

Lisa Beamer in her book *Let’s Roll!* says:

My conversation with Dennis reminded me of what I’d read from the Bible just a few nights earlier. So I flipped back to the same passage again. Although I’d read it many times previously, suddenly the words popped off the page at me:

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

*How unsearchable his judgments,
and his paths beyond tracing out!
“Who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?”
“Who has ever given to God,
that God should repay him?”
For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever! Amen.* —Romans 11:33-36

As I read those words, a thought struck me. *Who are you to question God and say that you have a better plan than he does? You don't have the same wisdom and knowledge that he has, or the understanding of the big picture. You think you deserve a happy life and get angry when it doesn't always happen like that. In fact, you are a sinner and deserve only death. The fact that God has offered you hope for eternal life is amazing! You should be overwhelmed with joy and gratitude.* (83-84)

How about expressing our gratitude this morning by singing a couple of verses of **“His Eye Is on the Sparrow”**: *“Why should I feel discouraged, Why should the shadows come, Why should my heart be lonely And long for Heav'n and home When Jesus is my portion? My constant Friend is He: His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me. ‘Let not your heart be troubled,’ His tender word I hear, And resting on His goodness I lose my doubt and fears; Tho' by the path He leadeth But one step I may see: His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me.”*

February 2 — My Promises (Ps. 116:13-14)

Psalm 116:13: *“I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.”*

Psalm 116:14: *“I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.”*

Verse 13: *“I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.”*

There are 2 things the Psalmist says he will do to “repay the Lord”: (1) “I will lift up the cup of salvation” and (2) “I will...call on the name of the Lord.”

Ron Allen says: “Then he took the cup. How many times have we participated in the Lord’s table and have heard the words concerning the cup, but have never thought of the importance of the definite article, *‘the cup’*? During the Passover meal there are four cups of wine, two before the meal and two after. The third cup is ‘the cup of salvation’—how appropriate a name for the cup our Savior raised!”

Ron Allen says further: “Can you see it? Jesus reaches out his own hand as he sings these words. He grasps the cup of Elijah, holds it high, raising the cup in blessing to God. All the while he knew *within* that this cup was a symbol of his blood. All the while he knew that this cup would only become the cup of salvation if he were to be faithful to the Father and proceed to the cross. There he holds the cup. Angels of heaven shrink back. There he holds the cup. His father in heaven is grieved at the thought. There he holds the cup. And because he holds it high, we may live forever!”

Verse 14: *“I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.”*

In our meditation thus far in verse 13 we had 2 promises. Now there is 1 final promise here in verse 14: (1) “I will lift up the cup of salvation”; (2) “I will...call on the name of the Lord”; and (3) “I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.”

Joseph Alexander translates verse 14: “My vows to Jehovah will I pay—in the presence of all his people.”

This struggle for the Jesus was going to come in the Garden of Gethsemane when He cries out to the Father: “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will but yours be done.”

Hebrews 5:7-8: “In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered” (NASB).

Does it not seem good for us to take a fresh look at Calvary this morning by singing **“Hallelujah! What a Savior!”**: *“‘Man of sorrows’—what a name For the Son of God, who came Ruined sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah! what a Savior! Bearing shame and scoffing rude, In my place condemned He stood—Sealed my pardon with His blood. Hallelujah! what a Savior! Guilty, vile, and helpless we; Spotless Lamb of God was He. ‘Full atonement’—can it be? Hallelujah! what a Savior! Lifted up was He to die; ‘It is finished,’ was His cry. Now in heav’n exalted high—Hallelujah! what a Savior! When He comes, our glorious King. All His ransomed home to bring, Then anew this song we’ll sing, ‘Hallelujah! what a Savior!’”*

February 3 — Home Where I Belong (Ps. 116:15)

Psalm 116:15: *“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”*

Verse 15: *“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”*

This meditation in Psalm 116:15 reminds me of a song that B.J. Thomas recorded 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 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.”

Philippians 1:21-24: “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake” (NASB).

2 Corinthians 5:1-5: “For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven; inasmuch as we, having put it on, shall not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge” (NASB).

Ron Allen says: “With cup held high, the thought of death paramount on his mind, the Savior’s thoughts must have gone to the next words of this intensely messianic psalm: Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.”

Warren Wiersbe says: “Neither your life nor your death is an accident. Take comfort in the fact that God knew every detail about your life before you were born. You have work to do for Him, and only when that is finished will He take you to be with Himself.”

Fanny Crosby wrote many great hymns. One of my favorite is **“My Saviour First of All.”** Knowing that she was blind and wrote this hymn explaining who would be the first one she would want to see. Let’s join in singing together verses 1 and 2: *“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. Oh, the soul thrilling rapture when I view His blessed face, And the luster of His kindly beaming eye; How my full heart will praise Him for the mercy, love and grace, That prepares for me a mansion in the sky. 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.”*

February 4 — I Am Your Servant (Ps. 116:16-17)

Psalm 116:16: *“O Lord, truly I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant; you have freed me from my chains.”*

Psalm 116:17: *“I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the Lord.”*

Verse 16: “O Lord, truly I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant; you have freed me from my chains.”

Ron Allen says: “Isn’t it touching to read in this psalm the reference to blessed Mary as well? ‘I [Y’shua] am your servant, the son of your maidservant [Mary].’ All of this points to the cross. It points to the Savior hanging there. It points to his Father grieving there. It points to his mother in grief there as well. What a scene this is! The most amazing thing is that the words describing this scene were written as a hymn for Israel to sing, hundreds of years before the Savior would sing them with his disciples for their fullest meaning.”

Henry Blackaby says: “As God’s obedient child, you are in a love relationship with him. He loves you and wants to involve you in his work. When he is ready, he will show you where he is working so you can join him.”

Oswald Chambers said: “It is impossible to get exhausted in work for God. We get exhausted because we try to do God’s work in our own way.”

Verse 17: “I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the Lord.”

You will notice the number of “I will’s” in these verses: (1) verse 13—“I will lift up the cup of salvation”; (2) verse 13—“I will...call on the name of the Lord”; (3) verse 14—“I will fulfill my vows”; (4) verse 17—“I will sacrifice a thank offering to you”; and (5) verse 17—“I will...call on the name of the Lord.”

Our grandson, when he married, wanted to include in the wedding the washing of the bride’s feet. With the words of “Let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you.”

Join me in singing that chorus of worship and commitment, **“I Will Serve Thee”**: *“I will serve thee because I love Thee; You have given life to me. I was nothing before You found me; You have given life to me. Heartaches, broken pieces, Ruined lives are why You died on Calv’ry. Your touch was what I longed for; You have given life to me.”*

February 5 — 101 Years in the Same Church (Mark)

My parents grew up in a farming community in rural North Dakota. One of the families who farmed near the Skorheim farm was the Rusvold family. On my visits to North Dakota I met one of the Rusvolds, a lady named Thelma. Thelma had several amazing distinctions: to everyone’s amazement, Thelma was given a speeding ticket on the way to her 90 birthday party! One of my uncles later interceded, and the “charges” were dropped. Another striking element of Thelma’s life is that she was born, lived and died in the same community at age 101.

But to me the most amazing distinction of Thelma’s life is that for 101 years, she was a member of the same church! Not only was she a member, but she was the organist at Hoff Lutheran Church for over 80 years!

I would have liked to ask Thelma several questions about why she never changed churches. Didn’t she have any of the familiar issues on why people change churches?

In 101 years was there not a Pastor with whom you did not really “click?”

In 101 years did the church leaders never make a decision you did not like?

In 101 years did a fellow member not “slight” you, and you just didn’t want to deal with it?

In 101 years did the Ladies Missionary Society give money to a mission in Africa, and you thought it would be better used in Asia?

In 101 years was the ladies restroom painted off-white, and you would have rather had egg shell white?

In 101 years was there not “music issues” and you wanted to move to a church that had music you “really” liked?

In 101 years was not too much attention paid to the youth, and the senior generation felt neglected?

I don’t know if Thelma had a world’s record in church membership, but I’m sure it is close.

I realize at times it is necessary to change churches, but often the reasons seem selfish, not Spirit-lead.

Thelma obviously lived the following verses:

1 Corinthians 13:4-5: "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged."

Galatians 6:9: "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary."

What is your attitude toward your church right now? Maybe we should all be a little more like Thelma!

February 6 — I Just Want to Say Thank You (Ps. 116:18-19)

Psalm 116:18: "I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people,"

Psalm 116:19: "in the courts of the house of the Lord—in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord."

Verse 18: "I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people,"

Here we have a repetition of what he said in verse 14.

Now we have a public pronouncement. The Psalmist is saying: "Everything I promised, I'm going to perform. Whatever my duty, it will be done."

I am reminded of the words in 1 Kings 8:56: "Praise be to the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses" (NIV).

I can just hear the Psalmist singing that chorus: "Make me a servant, humble and meek, Lord let me lift up those who are weak. And may the pray'r of my heart always be; Make me a servant, make me a servant, Make me a servant, today."

Verse 19: "in the courts of the house of the Lord—in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord."

Don Wyrzten asks the question: "'How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me?' I can pray, praise, and offer my life as a living sacrifice. The only fitting conclusion is again, 'Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!'"

Anne Graham Lotz says:

I long for . . .

*More of His voice in my ear,
More of His tears on my face,
More of His praise on my lips,
More of His death in my life,
More of His dirt on my hands,
More of His hope in my grief,
More of His fruit in my service,
More of His love in my home,
More of His courage in my convictions,
More of His nearness in my loneliness,
More of His answers to my prayers,
More of His glory on my knees! (My Heart's Cry, 230)*

Join me in singing both verses of "**The Longer I Serve Him**": "*Since I started for the kingdom, Since my life He controls. Since I gave my heart to 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.*"

February 7 — The Sweet Taste of Victory (Ps. 126:1-2)

Psalm 126:1: "When the Lord brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed."

Psalms 126:2: *“Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, ‘The Lord has done great things for them.’”*

This is another psalm that Jesus sang on the way up to Jerusalem with His parents for Passover.

Verse 1: *“When the Lord brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed.”*

Eugene Peterson paraphrases verse 1: “It seemed like a dream, too good to be true, when God returned Zion’s exiles.”

“When the Lord brought back the captives to Zion.” Notice in this phrase that this is something that the Lord did.

When I pray the Jabez prayer in my devotions each morning, I ask the Lord to bless me indeed! “Lord, do something so big that it is obviously from You.”

“When the Lord brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed.”

There are going to be 3 things that are said in these first couple of verses about these returnees: (1) They were men who were dreaming; (2) their “mouths were filled with laughter”; and (3) their “tongues with songs of joy.”

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).

The joy and excitement of the children of Israel in verse 1 makes me feel that what they were experiencing is what we, too, are going to experience at that moment we step onto that eternal shore and we find ourselves home and forever with the Lord.

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).

Verse 2: *“Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, ‘The Lord has done great things for them.’”*

Back in verse 1 we learned they “were like who dreamed.” Now here in verse 2 we learn their “mouths were filled with laughter” and their “tongues with songs of joy.” The word “Then” gives us the result of these previous statements about them. The impact of this was seen in the response of the nations: “Then it was said among the nations, ‘The Lord has done great things for them.’” Notice once again the focus: “The Lord has done.” Their laughter and songs produced a witness. They are giving testimony to the world.

Isaiah 52:10: “The Lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God” (NIV).

Joel 2:20-21: “...Surely he has done great things. Be not afraid, O land; be glad and rejoice. Surely the Lord has done great things” (NIV).

C. H. Spurgeon said: “So full were they of joy that they could not contain themselves. They must express their joy and yet they could not find expression for it. Irrepressible mirth could do no other than laugh, for speech was far too dull a thing for it. The mercy was so unexpected, so amazing, so singular that they could not do less than laugh; and they laughed much, so that their mouths were full of it, and that because their hearts were full too.”

It is joy unspeakable and full of glory.

There is a day soon coming when He is going to bring us out. The rapture of the church will take place and these very emotions that have been expressed in these 2 verses will be similar.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord” (NASB).

Let’s express our joy this morning by singing **“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! Won’t you come to Him with all your care, Weary and worn and sad? You, too, will sing as His love you share, 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!”*

February 8 — Great Things He Hath Done! (Ps. 126:3)

Psalm 126:3: "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy."

Verse 3: "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy."

Eugene Peterson paraphrases verse 3: "God was wonderful to us; we are one happy people."

Verse 3 is the record of their testimony: (1) "The Lord has done" and (2) "we are filled." What the Lord has done and how we responded.

"The Lord has done great things" points to the past. "We are filled with joy" points to the present.

This verse prompts me to wonder if maybe after the Lord had sung these words, He then spoke 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).

Psalm 116:5: "How kind the Lord is! How good he is! So merciful, this God of ours!" (NLT).

Don Wyrzten has a personal prayer: "*Remind me, O Lord, of the major triumphs You have accomplished in my behalf—my salvation, my eternal security, my constant protection—and don't let my song lapse into a minor mode!*"

Warren Wiersbe says: "*'Great things He has done!' is the theme of many people who have experienced God's grace.*"

Ron Allen says:

It was one of those nights one will never forget. Never!

Famed gospel singer Sandi Patti was seated at my right. She had just finished singing, and I had sensed heaven opened as the beauty of her art wrapped my praise and wafted it upward. Her singing in itself made the night one I would not forget.

On my left was a dear college friend who had arranged for my special seat. Next to him was Dr. Billy Graham. This was a night!

Then George Beverly Shea went to the podium to sing just before the sermon by Mr. Graham.

The piano introduction caught me totally by surprise. This my friend had not arranged. This was the Lord's doing, through the action of Mr. Shea.

He began to sing the words of a song that has meant more than life to me:

I Found a Friend

when life seemed not worth living.

I Found a Friend

so tender and forgiving...

I looked over to where my wife was seated in the near stands in the stadium in Boise, Idaho. She was weeping. Mr. Graham reached around my friend Carl Johnson, smiled as he touched my arm, and I began weeping also.

This was a song my father had written years ago. Later that night, Mr. Shea told us that he has sung it at every Billy Graham crusade everywhere in the world since 1953....

Here are the last words of Dad's song:

Because He came my soul will live in glory.

I'll praise His name, and tell my Savior's story.

What friend so true would give his all for you?

I Found a Friend and life began anew.

I'm sure you'll find that He is your friend too.

What a testimony here in verse 3: (1) "The Lord has done great things for us" and (2) "we are filled with joy."

Let's express our praise and worship this morning by singing a couple of verses of "**Joy Unspeakable**": "*I have found His grace is all complete, He supplieth ev'ry need; While I sit and learn at Jesus' feet, I am free, yes, free indeed. I have found the joy no tongue can tell, How its waves of glory roll! It is like a great o'erflowing well, Springing up within my soul. It is joy unspeakable and full of*

glory, Full of glory, full of glory; It is joy unspeakable and full of glory, Oh, the half has never yet been told."

February 9 — Restore To Me The Joy of Your Salvation (Ps. 126:4)

Psalm 126:4: "Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the Negev."

Verse 4: "Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the Negev."

Here in verse 4 we turn from these great statements of praise to petition: "Restore our fortunes, O Lord."

He then gives an illustration: "like streams in the Negev."

The key to streams is showers of blessing!

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).

Psalm 32:3-4: "When I refused to confess my sin, I was weak and miserable, and I groaned all day long. Day and night Your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat."

"Too many people pray like little boys who knock on doors, then run away." (Anonymous)

I love Bishop Lancelot Andrews prayer: "...instruct me to do what things are pleasing in thy sight, for Thou art my God; let thy loving Spirit lead me forth into the land of righteousness."

Let's celebrate by singing 2 verses of "**Surely Goodness and Mercy**": "*A pilgrim was I, and awand'ring, In the cold night of sin I did roam, When Jesus the kind Shepherd found me, And now I am on my way home. He restoreth my soul when I'm weary, He giveth me strength day by day; He leads me beside the still waters, He guards me each step of the way. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days, all the days of my life; Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days, all the days of my life.*"

February 10 — Weeping Tonight and Joy In the Morning (Ps. 126:5)

Psalm 126:5: "Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy."

Verse 5: "Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy."

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).

Jeremiah 4:3: "This is what the Lord says to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem: 'Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns'" (NIV).

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).

2 Chronicles 15:7: "But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded" (NIV).

Warren Wiersbe says: "Did you know that each one of us is a sower? Each of us today is sowing seed that will produce a harvest. Some people are sowing to the flesh. Paul tells us in Galatians 6:8 that those who sow to the flesh will reap corruption. Some are sowing discord among the brethren. Some are sowing lies. Psalm 126 tells us to be careful what and how we sow, because we're the ones who will reap the harvest."

Galatians 6:7: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap" (NASB).

John 4:35: "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest" (NASB).

Joni Eareckson Tada says: "It's ironic. In heaven, where I will be able once again to wipe my own tears, I won't have to."

Billy Graham said: "Tears shed for self are tears of weakness, but tears shed for others are a sign of strength."

Bill Bright in his book *Promises* says: “A stricken widow stood beside the coffin of her husband. She said to a friend, ‘There lies my only earthly support, my most faithful human friend, one who has never failed me; but I must not forget there lies also the will of God, and that will is perfect love.’” (Day 185)

Join me in singing a couple of verses of **“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. Your goodness so great I can’t understand. And dear Lord, I know that all this was planned. I know You’re here now, and always will be, Your love loosed my chains and in You I’m free. But Jesus, why me? And 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.’”*

February 11 — You Crown the Year with Your Bounty—Psalm 65:11 (Ps. 126:6)

Psalm 126:6: *“He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.”*

Verse 6: “He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.”

The focus in verse 6 should be on the 4 verbs. He: (1) “goes out”; (2) “carrying”; (3) “return”; and (4) “carrying.”

When “He...goes out” he is “carrying seed.” When he comes back, he is “carrying sheaves.”

Warren Wiersbe says: “God’s people weep as they sow, but they will reap in joy. As a Christian, you are to sow the seed of the Word of God by sowing good deeds, truth and His love. You plant the seed that produces the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

Galatians 6:9: “Let us not grow tired of doing good, for, unless we throw in our hand, the ultimate harvest is assured” (Phillips).

A Swiss professor has calculated that if nothing hindered or blighted a single grain of wheat, in only 8 years that lone kernel would multiply sufficiently to feed all the inhabitants of the earth for a whole year. (InfoSearch 3.21)

Hudson Taylor was used mightily to not only found the China Inland Mission but to have a phenomenal impact on China itself. Calvin Miller records this experience:

When missionary Hudson Taylor’s wife lay dying, their blessed romance was coming to a close in terms of their earthly existence. Yet they endured the passing with great affection:

“My darling, are you conscious that you are dying?”

“Dying? Do you think so? What makes you think so?”

“I can see it, Darling.”

“What is making me die?”

“Your strength is giving way.”

“Can it be so? I feel no pain, only weakness.”

“Yes, you are going home. You will soon be with Jesus.”

“I am sorry...”

“You are not sorry to go to be with Jesus?”

“I cannot be sorry to go to Him...But it does grieve me to leave you alone at such a time. Yet...He will be with you and meet all your needs.” (Calvin Miller, *Jesus Loves Me*. Hudson Taylor as quoted in Miller, *Book of Jesus*, 587.)

Let’s sing together a couple of verses of that fabulous hymn **“When We See Christ”**: *“Oft times the day seems long, our trials hard to bear, We’re tempted to complain, to murmur and despair; But Christ will soon appear to catch his Bride away, All tears forever over in God’s eternal day. Life’s day will soon be o’er all storms forever past, We’ll cross the great divide to glory, safe at last; We’ll share the joys of heav’n a harp, a home, a crown, The tempter will be banished, we’ll lay our burden down. It will*

be worth it all when we see Jesus, Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ; One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase, So bravely run the race till we see Christ."

February 12 — Pursuing Christlikeness (Pearl)

"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1 NASB).

"That He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word" (Eph. 5:26 NASB).

Sanctification—Being made one with Jesus. The word means to be set apart for a holy purpose.

Sanctification means to be intensely focused on God's point of view.

"Sanctification also means being one with Jesus so that the nature that controlled Him will control us." (Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*, Feb. 8)

"And give myself entirely to you so they also might be entirely yours" (John 17:19 NLT).

"I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me" (John 17:21-23 NLT).

Does this commitment cause you to fear? Am I ready to lose control?

Only one thing will conquer our fears: tenacious faith in God's presence, protection, power, and promises.

If your fear is putting God's wonderful plans for you at risk, remember that He will never ask you to do anything He can't bring to completion, even if it requires miraculous intervention on His part. (Joe Stowell, *Our Daily Bread*, July 19, 2010)

"like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation" (1 Pet. 2:2 NASB).

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen" (2 Pet. 3:18 NASB).

Ruth Paxson in *Life on the Highest Plane* says: "The process of conformity is going on day by day in the spiritual man's life. It is a transformation from obedience to obedience, from dependence to dependence, from victory to victory, from holiness to holiness, from righteousness to righteousness and from love to love. As the spiritual man gets a larger vision of this perfect pattern through daily study of God's Word, he takes higher ground along the line of the God-given revelation, so that his life is a continuous growing up into Christ in all things." (262)

Let's conclude our worship 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 table-land, A higher plane that I have found; Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."*

February 13 — O Lord Listen, O Lord Forgive, O Lord Hear and Act—Daniel 9:19 (Ps. 141:1)

Psalm 141:1: *"O Lord, I call to you; come quickly to me. Hear my voice when I call to you."*

Psalm 141 is an evening psalm during the time of Absalom. It's an evening prayer for sanctification and protection. You know you've made mistakes and you need protection.

Verse 1: "O Lord, I call to you; come quickly to me. Hear my voice when I call to you."

You can tell that in this evening prayer David is really hurting. He opens his heart with 2 requests immediately: (1) "come quickly" and (2) "Hear." David is asking for communion, closeness, and caring concern.

This is not a time for answering machines or voicemail. Check your caller ID, it's me! This is a 9-1-1 call.

Psalm 31:2: "Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me" (NIV).

Ron Allen says: “The true sincerity and intensity of David in our Psalm are expressed in direct address to the living Yahweh.”

John Piper states it well: “When things are going ‘bad,’ that does not mean that God has stopped doing good. It means that He is shifting things around to get them in place for more good, if you will go on loving Him.” (*The Pleasures of God*, 189)

David’s heart has got to be tender. He’s lost Amnon, Chileab, the kingdom, and Absalom is going to be next.

Daniel 9:19: “O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name” (NIV).

A song made popular back in the 60’s that we often sang in youth group was **“Reach Out To Jesus.”** Let’s sing a couple of verses of this Ralph Carmichael song: *“Is your burden heaven as you bear it all alone? Does the road you travel harbor danger yet unknown? Are you growing weary in the struggle of it all? Jesus will help you when on His name you call. Is the life you’re living filled with sorrow and despair? Does the future press you with its worry and its care? Are you tired and friendless, have you almost lost your way? Jesus will help you just come to Him today. He is always there hearing ev’ry prayer faithful and true. Walking by our side in His love we hide all the day through. When you get discouraged just remember what to do Reach out to Jesus, He’s reaching out to you.”*

February 14 — May My Prayer Be a Sweet Fragrance to You (Ps. 141:2)

Psalm 141:2: *“May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.”*

Verse 2: *“May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.”*

Just as we had 2 requests in verse 1, we now have 2 requests in verse 2. The 2 requests in verse 1 were “come quickly” and “hear.” Now the 2 requests in verse 2 are “May my prayer be set before you like incense” and “may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.”

He characterizes his prayer with 2 illustrations: (1) “like incense” and (2) “like the evening sacrifice.”

2 Corinthians 2:14-15: “But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing” (NASB).

Our prayers become sweet and fragrant when they are backed up by an obedient life.

Don Wyrzten says: “For many people prayer is a one-liner beginning with ‘Gimme.’ For others, it’s a heavy ‘thank you’ mumbled over meals, or a bedtime blessing left over from childhood. For David, prayer was a way of life.”

John MacArthur said: “Only one thing really matters from the moment you become a Christian until the day you see Jesus—that you walk worthy of Him. What you own, what you know, and what you do for a living are not all that important.”

Andrew Reed says: “Come as the fire, and purge our hearts with sacrificial flame; Let our whole soul an offering be to our Redeemer’s Name.” (Nancy Leigh DeMoss, *Brokenness*, 17)

Roy Hession says: “Being broken is both God’s work and ours. He brings His pressure to bear, but we have to make the choice...All day long the choice will be before us in a thousand ways.” (*The Calvary Road*, 23, 25)

Please join me in singing that wonderful hymn **“Sweet Hour of Prayer”:** *“Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, That calls me from a world of care, And bids me at my Father’s throne Make all my wants and wishes known; In seasons of distress and grief, My soul has often found relief, And oft escaped the tempter’s snare, By thy return, sweet hour of prayer. Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, Thy wings shall my petition bear, To Him whose truth and faithfulness Engage the waiting soul to bless; And since He bids me seek His face, Believe His word and trust His grace, I’ll cast on Him my ev’ry care, And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer. Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, may I thy consolation share, Till, from Mount Pisgah’s lofty height, I view my home, and take my flight: This robe of flesh I’ll*

drop, and rise To seize the everlasting prize; And shout, while passing through the air, Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer!"

February 15 — Lord, Help Me to Watch My Tongue (Ps. 141:3)

Psalm 141:3: *"Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips."*

Verse 3: "Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips."

David is deeply concerned about sinning with his words. Therefore, he makes 2 requests in verse 3: (1) "Set a guard over my mouth" and (2) "keep watch over the door of my lips."

It is "Set a guard" and "keep watch." It is "my mouth" and "my lips" that are the concern of David.

We are going to notice that David is really intent upon laying hold of God with regard to his conversation, his conduct, and his companionships in these next couple of verses. We've already noted that he is deeply concerned about his communion with the Lord.

James was so concerned about our words that he spent a whole chapter, James 3, dealing with the tongue. James 1:19: "This you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger" (NASB).

Matthew 12:34: "You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart" (NASB).

1 Peter 3:10: "For, 'Let him who means to love life and see good days refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile'" (NASB).

Ephesians 4:25, 29: "Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another... Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear" (NASB).

Hebrews 10:24: "and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds" (NASB).

There's a whole series of verses in Proverbs that have to do with the tongue and the use of words. Here are just a few:

Proverbs 4:24: "Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips" (NIV).

Proverbs 12:14: "From the fruit of his lips a man is filled with good things as surely as the work of his hands rewards him" (NIV).

Proverbs 12:18: "Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing" (NIV).

Proverbs 13:3: "He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin" (NIV).

Proverbs 15:23: "A man finds joy in giving an apt reply—and how good is a timely word!" (NIV).

Proverbs 21:23: "He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity" (NIV).

Psalm 34:13-14: "keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it" (NIV).

Wife: Scientists claim that the average person speaks 10,000 words a day.

Husband: Yes, dear, but remember, you are above the average. (InfoSearch 3.51)

The conversation between Adam and Eve must have been difficult at times because they had nobody to talk about. (InfoSearch 3.51)

I feel this morning that a fresh glimpse of Jesus will help us be careful about how we use our tongues this day. Join me in singing a couple of verses of **"Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus"** / **"The Heavenly Vision"**: *O soul, are you weary and troubled? No light in the darkness you see? There's light for a look at the Savior, And life more abundant and free! His word shall not fail you He promised; Believe Him and all will be well: Then go to a world that is dying, His perfect salvation to tell! 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.”

February 16 — Help Me to Yield Not to Temptation (Ps. 141:4)

Psalm 141:4: *“Let not my heart be drawn to what is evil, to take part in wicked deeds with men who are evildoers; let me not eat of their delicacies.”*

Verse 4: “Let not my heart be drawn to what is evil, to take part in wicked deeds with men who are evildoers; let me not eat of their delicacies.”

This verse is part of the training in righteousness.

The phrase “Let not” occurs twice in this verse as David describes his fears. We could add 1 more and make it 3. We read in this verse: (1) “Let not my heart be drawn to what is evil”; (2) “[Let not my hands] take part in wicked deeds with men who are evildoers”; and (3) “let me not eat of their delicacies.”

This is a graphic picture of Satan’s temptation. He works on the heart to be “drawn to what is evil.” Then the process of taking part in it, and then eating of “their delicacies.”

This is a graphic description of Genesis 3 as Satan gets Eve desires involved, and a decision is made, and then the decision made finally to eat of the delicacies.

Desires, decision, and devours.

The 3-point strategy of Satan is seen in these crucial words in this verse: (1) “be drawn”; (2) “take part”; and (3) “eat.”

Psalm 1:1: “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers” (NIV).

James 1:14-16: “But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren” (NASB).

This prayer has David’s affair written all over. It is the longing of David’s heart that the Lord: (1) “Let not [his] heart be drawn to what is evil”; (2) That the Lord let him not “take part in wicked deeds with men who are evildoers”; and (3) that he would “not eat of their delicacies.”

This is a prayer from the heart of experience. I can just hear David saying the words of Job in Job 34:32: “Teach me what I cannot see; if I have done wrong, I will not do so again” (NIV).

Proverbs 4:17: “They eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence” (NIV).

C.S. Lewis said: Think of me as a fellow patient in the same hospital who, having been admitted a little earlier, can give some advice.”

One writer says: “Because we are what we are, we’ve done what we’ve done. Because we’ve done what we’ve done, we’re going where we’re going!”

John MacArthur says: “We need to guard our minds, emotions, and wills. We need to seek God’s will by meditating on His Word and letting His will become ours. An unprotected, uncontrolled, and unyielded mind is going to be filled with evil desires that will result in evil deeds. We must control how our emotions and minds respond to the tempting bait they encounter.” (*Truth For Today*, 326)

A good principle for us to remember that will help us in the arena of temptation is: “Consistency is not a performance or a promise but flows freely from our passion.” (unknown)

When our passion is right, then our actions are going to be right.

If our passion is to please the Lord and to bring Him glory and honor, then the power of temptation subsides in view of that passion.

I think it would be very helpful to us if we would conclude today’s meditation by singing verses 1 and 3 of **“Yield Not to Temptation”**: *“Yield not to temptation, For yielding is sin; Each vict’ry will help you Some other to win; Fight manfully onward, Dark passions subdue; Look ever to Jesus, He’ll carry you through. To him that o’ercometh, God giveth a crown; Thru’ faith we will conquer, Though often cast down; He who is our Saviour, Our strength will renew; Look ever to Jesus, He’ll carry you through. Ask the Saviour to help you, Comfort, strengthen, and keep you; He is willing to aid you, He will carry you through.”*

February 17 — Give Me An Attitude of Gratitude for Accountability (Ps. 141:5)

Psalm 141:5: “*Let a righteous man strike me—it is a kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil on my head. My head will not refuse it. Yet my prayer is ever against the deeds of evildoers;*”

Verse 5: “Let a righteous man strike me—it is a kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil on my head. My head will not refuse it. Yet my prayer is ever against the deeds of evildoers;”

Proverbs 15:31: “He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise” (NIV).

Proverbs 17:10: “A rebuke impresses a man of discernment more than a hundred lashes a fool” (NIV).

Proverbs 25:12: “Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man’s rebuke to a listening ear” (NIV).

Here David is speaking about the justifiable discipline that comes from a “righteous man.”

There are 3 key words that describe the process: (1) “strike”; (2) “rebuke”; and (3) “not refuse.”

Proverbs 27:6: “Faithful are the wounds of a friend but the kisses of an enemy may be profuse” (Darby).

David describes this discipline or “rebuke” in 2 ways: (1) “it is a kindness” and (2) “it is oil on my head.”

We see in David’s life a couple of times that rebukes were very effective. The first was when Nathan confronted David with a parable to reveal his sin. The second was Joab in 2 Samuel 19, about his prolonged grieving over the death of Absalom.

2 Samuel 19:5-7: “Then Joab went into the house to the king and said, ‘Today you have humiliated all your men, who have just saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters and the lives of your wives and concubines. You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. You have made it clear today that the commanders and their men mean nothing to you. I see that you would be pleased if Absalom were alive today and all of us were dead. Now go out and encourage your men. I swear by the Lord that if you don’t go out, not a man will be left with you by nightfall...’” (NIV).

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).

It was Andrew Murray who said: “Humility is perfect quietness of heart.”

David concludes verse 5 with the phrase: “yet my prayer is ever against the deeds of evildoers.”

We will see more of this in the next verses.

Let’s pause for a moment and let Lancelot Andrews share with us his prayer: “To Thee, O Lord, belongeth righteousness, and to me confusion of face: My destruction cometh to me of myself.”

A proper response to accountability and discipline can best be expressed in singing that wonderful hymn “**Have Thine Own Way, Lord**”: “*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Thou art the Potter, I am the clay. Mould me and make me After Thy will, While I am waiting, Yielded and still. Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Search me and try me, Master, today! Whiter than snow, Lord, Wash me just now, As in Thy presence Humbly I bow. Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Wounded and weary, Help me, I pray! Power all power Surely is Thine! Touch me and heal me, Saviour divine! Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Hold o’er my being Absolute sway! Fill with Thy Spirit Till all shall see Christ only, always, Living in me!*”

February 18 — Sin’s Consequences Will Be Obvious (Ps. 141:6)

Psalm 141:6: “*their rulers will be thrown down from the cliffs, and the wicked will learn that my words were well spoken.*”

Verse 6: “their rulers will be thrown down from the cliffs, and the wicked will learn that my words were well spoken.”

Whereas back in verse 3 the Psalmist spoke about his “mouth” and “lips,” he now speaks of his “words” here in verse 6. “The wicked will learn that my words were well spoken.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “But his **prayer** was **against...the wicked**; he anticipated they would be utterly destroyed after they learned that his **words** were correct.” (894)

Derek Kidner said: "In short, David affirms that judgment will overtake the leaders ('judges') of his opponents, and then at last their followers will listen to him gladly."

Leroy Brownlow said: "Calamity often opens hearts to receive teaching. In the midst of health and prosperity, there are those who have no disposition to listen. But when the storm strikes and they are left beaten and bruised amidst the wreckage, they are more inclined to take heed. Standing there on the rubbish of disappointment and insecurity, stripped of haughtiness, arrogance and self-sufficiency, the aching heart is more receptive."

Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death" (NIV).

There are many who are prideful, rebellious and will let their final act of defiance their own personal destruction.

Joel 3:14: "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision" (NIV).

Amos 5:24: "But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" (NIV).

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).

Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it" (NASB).

Let's bear witness to our eternal salvation by singing John Newton's great hymn "**Amazing Grace**": *"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. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved; How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed! Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come; 'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home. The Lord has promised good to me, His word my hope secures; He will my shield and portion be As long as life endures. And when this flesh and heart shall fail, And mortal life shall cease; I shall possess within the veil A life of joy and peace. When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, We've no less days to sing God's praise Than when we first begun."*

February 19 — A Love Note From the Word (Donna)

What a blessing there are so many translations and versions of the Bible. I am sure like me you have read a Scripture verse in a new translation and the new words bring home to your heart afresh understanding of the eternal truth of the verse.

Recently, while waiting for a funeral to begin, I was reading the funeral program. Zephaniah 3:17 was on the back of the program. This verse was in one of the new translations. Every time I read this familiar verse in this translation I discover a new thought or I am captivated by a new expression or word.

As I have meditated on this verse I have been overwhelmed with God's love. Need a reminder of just how much your Creator loves and delights in you? Read the following verse several times, concentrating on every word. After the newer translation I will add a more familiar simpler translation. As you read I pray God will help you to realize in a new fresh way, just how deep, wide and boundless is His great love for you His child. He is in love with you. You are His great delight. Take your time in reading and if possible make a copy of this verse and put it somewhere you can read it again and again throughout the week.

Zephaniah 3:17: "The eternal self-existent God, the God who is three in one, He who dwells in the center of your being is a powerful, Valiant Warrior! He has come to set you free, to keep you safe and to bring you victory. He is cheered, and He beams with exceeding joy and takes pleasure in your presence. He has engraved a place for Himself in you and there He quietly rests in His love and affection for you. He cannot contain Himself at the thought of you and with the greatest of joy spins around wildly in anticipation over you and has placed you above all other creations and in the highest place in His priorities. In fact, He shouts and sings and triumphs joyfully proclaiming the gladness of His heart in a song of rejoicing all because of you! Hear the voice of the Lord as He sings over you, His child."

Zephaniah 3:17: "The LORD your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy."

February 20 — The Wages of Sin is Death (Ps. 141:7)

Psalm 141:7: "[They will say,] 'As one plows and breaks up the earth, so our bones have been scattered at the mouth of the grave.'"

Verse 7: "[They will say,] 'As one plows and breaks up the earth, so our bones have been scattered at the mouth of the grave.'"

George Horne said: "This probably alludes to the bloody massacre of Ahimelech, and the priests that were in Nob, who, to the number of eighty-five persons, all of a sacred character, and all innocent, were inhumanly slaughtered together by Doeg the Edomite."

F. W. Grant said: "We must take it then as a figure, such as in Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones, a picture of life apparently gone, and hope with life, save as faith could count upon the God of resurrection."

Moses in his farewell address makes it quite clear to the people of God the consequences of continuing to live in sin and rebellion. Deuteronomy 28:65-66: "Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the Lord will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life" (NIV).

Deuteronomy 28:47-48: "Because you did not serve the Lord your God joyfully and gladly in the time of prosperity, therefore in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and dire poverty, you will serve the enemies the Lord sends against you. He will put an iron yoke on your neck until he has destroyed you" (NIV).

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).

Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (NASB).

Romans 1:22-25: "Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen" (NASB).

Revelation 20:15: "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire" (NASB).

Revelation 21:27: "and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life" (NASB).

Sing with me today, **"I Know Whom I Have Believed":** *"I know not why God's wondrous grace To me He hath made known, Nor why unworthy, Christ in love, Redeemed me for His own. I know not how this saving faith To me He did impart, Nor how believing in His Word Wrought peace within my heart. I know not when my Lord may come, At night or noontide fair, Nor if I'll walk the vale with Him, Or 'meet Him in the air.' But 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed Unto Him against that day.'"*

February 21 — Lord, I Am Focused on You (Ps. 141:8)

Psalm 141:8: "But my eyes are fixed on you, O Sovereign Lord; in you I take refuge—do not give me over to death."

Verse 8: "But my eyes are fixed on you, O Sovereign Lord; in you I take refuge—do not give me over to death."

The word "But" at the beginning of verse 8 forms the contrast to the "wicked" in the previous verses. "But my eyes are fixed on you, O Sovereign Lord." Notice the phrases "on you" and "in you I take refuge."

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).

Job 31:1: “I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl” (NIV).

Psalm 119:37: “Turn my eyes from worthless things, and give me life through your word” (NIV).

2 Corinthians 4:17-18: “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).

2 Corinthians 3:18: “But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit” (NASB).

Dag Hammarskjöld said: “Never look down to test the ground before taking your next step. Only he who keeps his eye fixed on the far horizon will find his right road.”

C. H. Spurgeon said: “He looked upward and kept his eyes fixed there. He regarded duty more than circumstances; he considered the promises rather than the external providence; and he expected from God rather than from men. He did not shut his eyes in indifference or despair, neither did he turn them to the creatures in vain, confidence, but he gave his eyes to his God, and saw nothing to fear.”

F.B. Meyer said: “Be prepared to follow your Lord through loneliness, homelessness, the rupture of tender ties, and the plowing of a solitary furrow. Be keeping your eye fixed on the eternal side of your life!”

An unknown author has written a poem entitled “Consider Him” to encourage us to keep our thoughts focused:

When the storm is raging high,
When the tempest rends the sky,
When my eyes with tears are dim,
Then, my soul, consider Him.

When my plans are in the dust,
When my dearest hopes are crushed,
When is passed each foolish whim,
Then, my soul, consider Him.

When I track my weary way,
When fresh trials come each day,
When my faith and hope are dim,
Then, my soul, consider Him.

Clouds or sunshine, dark or bright,
Evening shades or morning light,
When my cup flows o’er the brim.

Then, my soul, consider Him. (Elliot Johnson, *Game Day Decisions*, 53)

When we keep our eyes focused on our Lord, He truly gives more and more grace. Let’s sing a couple of verses of **“He Giveth More Grace”**: *“He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater; He sendeth more strength when the labors increase. To added affliction He addeth His mercy; to multiplied trials, His multiplied peace. When we have exhausted our store of endurance, When our strength has failed ere the day in half done, When we reach the end of our hoarded resources, Our Father’s full giving is only begun. His love has no limit; His grace has no measure; His pow’r has no boundary known unto men. For out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again!”*

February 22 — Make Me Aware of the Landmines (Ps. 141:9)

Psalm 141:9: “Keep me from the snares they have laid for me, from the traps set by evildoers.”

Verse 9: “Keep me from the snares they have laid for me, from the traps set by evildoers.”

There are 2 things he asks of the Lord after he says “my eyes are fixed on you, O Sovereign Lord; in you I take refuge”: (1) “do not give me over to death”—verse 8; and (2) “Keep me from the snares”—verse 9.

There are “snares they have laid” and “traps set.”

Psalm 140:5: “Proud men have hidden a snare for me; they have spread out the cords of their net and have set traps for me along my path. Selah” (NIV).

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” (NIV).

In Exodus 14:25-28 we have an illustration of how God handles that kind of a situation. When Pharaoh’s army and chariots were in the bed of the Red Sea we read: “He made the wheels of their chariots come off so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, ‘Let’s get away from the Israelites! The Lord is fighting for them against Egypt.’ Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen.’ Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the Lord swept them into the sea. The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived” (NIV).

David Jeremiah in his book *Slaying Giants in Your Life* says: “When you see the Exit sign glowing in the dark, push it open and make tracks. Missionary Jim Elliot said, ‘Don’t put yourself in a position to see how good your resistance is. When you feel temptation coming, get out of there!’” (95)

A man told the doctor his arm was broken in two places, and the doctor said, “Well, stop going to those two places.” Good advice, but Paul put it even better: “Make no provision for the flesh” (Romans 13:14). Go home by another way. (Jeremiah, 100)

Join me in singing verses 1 and 3 of **“Where He Leads I’ll Follow”**: “*Sweet are the promises; kind is the Word. Dearer far than any message man ever heard. Pure was the mind of Christ—sinless, I see. He the great example is, and pattern for me. List to His loving words: ‘Come unto me.’ Weary, heavy-laden, there is sweet rest for thee. Trust in His promises, faithful and sure; Learn upon the Savior, and thy soul is secure. Where He leads I’ll follow. Follow all the way. Where He leads I’ll follow, Follow Jesus ev’ry day.*”

February 23 — Lord, I’m Your Child, Keep Me Safe (Ps. 141:10)

Psalm 141:10: “Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass by in safety.”

Verse 10: “Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass by in safety.”

In these remaining 3 verses, verses 8-10, there are 3 requests: (1) “do not give me over to death”—verse 8; (2) “Keep me from the snares they have laid for me”—verse 9; and (3) “Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass by in safety”—verse 10.

2 Thessalonians 3:3: “But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one” (NASB).

Don Wyrzten says: “*O Lord, I know You hear my prayers just as You heard King David’s. Don’t let me fall into the traps set by the world, but let this humanistic society hang itself by its own rope while I pass by in safety.*”

Bruce Wilkinson says:

C. S. Lewis once said, “The safest road to hell is the gradual one—gentle slope, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.”

A trip downriver can be peaceful—until you hear the roar of the waterfall. By then, it may be too late to return safely to shore.

In the spiritual warfare, the believer’s best safeguard is to abide in Christ and remain alert. Don’t be deceived; the fire is hot and many are in danger. But a special blessing awaits those who make watchfulness their byword. (*Closer Walk*, 392)

F. B. Meyer challenges you to let God guard the door of your mind.

Any thought that infiltrates your mind from Satan's camp must be taken prisoner immediately. There can be no exceptions, no delay. Why? Because wherever your thoughts lead, your actions will almost certainly follow.

Let that captivating thought be your call to battle today—a battle you can win as you march in obedience to Christ. (Wilkinson, 230)

Warren Wiersbe raises the question: *"Are your prayers a good mix rather than a series of petitions? When you pray from the heart, you can't help but praise God and thank Him for His grace and generosity. Make you prayers like fragrant incense that brings joy to the heart of God."*

The key to victory is to stay close. I think it would be most meaningful for us as we conclude today's study to sing a couple of verses of **"Near to the Heart of God"**: *"There is a place of quiet rest, Near to the heart of God, A place where sin cannot molest, near to the heart of God. There is a place of full release, Near to the heart of God, A place where all is joy and peace, near to the heart of God. O Jesus, blest Redeemer, Sent from the heart of God, Hold us, who wait before Thee, near to the heart of God."*

February 24 — Panic Prayer (Ps. 143:1-2)

Psalm 143:1: *"O Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief."*

Psalm 143:2: *"Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you."*

Psalm 143 was written by David at the time Absalom was pursuing him in battle to bring an end to his kingdom.

Verse 1: "O Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief."

The 3 key words in verse 1 are: (1) "hear"; (2) "listen"; and (3) "come."

(1) "hear my prayer"; (2) "listen to my cry for mercy"; and (3) "come to my relief."

David is probably about 64-years-old when he writes this particular psalm from Mahanaim. He has lost the kingdom to his son Absalom after basically 11 years of estrangement.

Now he is trying to gather his thoughts together and do what is right in the situation.

Lord, please plug the dam and help me do what is right!

David, as he writes this psalm, feels betrayed, blindsided, and beaten to pieces.

Lord, its slim pickings down here. I can't find anyone who really wants to help!

"When we pray we relinquish in a radical way our so-called sovereignty over the purposes of our lives. We subordinate our plans, schedules, and life scenarios to the infinitely wiser and more joyful work of God's hands." (Ben Patterson, *Marriage Partnership*, Vol. 7, no. 3.)

Verse 2: "Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you."

David's petition is in the first phrase: "Do not bring your servant into judgment."

Hebrews 10:31: "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (NASB).

David is saying: "I've been there before and it wasn't pretty!"

The reason that follows the petition is seen in the last phrase: "for no one living is righteous before you."

Lord we're all in the same boat! We deserve judgment! But please, remember mercy!

Psalm 130:3-4: "If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared" (NIV).

Join with me in singing **"Part the Waters"** / **"I Need Thee Every Hour"**: *"When I think I'm going under, part the waters, Lord When I feel the waves around me, calm the sea. When I cry for help, oh, hear me Lord and hold out Your hand Touch my life Still the raging storm in me." "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 pow'r When Thou art nigh. I need Thee ev'ry hour, In joy or pain;*

come quickly and abide, Or life is vain. I need Thee; O, I need Thee; Ev'ry hour I need Thee! O bless me now, my Saviour, I come to Thee."

February 25 — Lord, I'm Whipped! (Ps. 143:3-4)

Psalm 143:3: "The enemy pursues me, he crushes me to the ground; he makes me dwell in darkness like those long dead."

Psalm 143:4: "So my spirit grows faint within me; my heart within me is dismayed."

Verse 3: "The enemy pursues me, he crushes me to the ground; he makes me dwell in darkness like those long dead."

The enemy here is Absalom. There are 3 things said about him and his forces: (1) "[He] pursues me"; (2) "he crushes me to the ground"; and (3) "he makes me dwell in darkness."

He gives an illustration of what that darkness is: "like those long dead."

You can feel the gloom and doom on David's part in this verse. Everyone has forgotten all that David has done for Israel over the 34 years of his reign. 13 years of military conflict, establishing the capital in Jerusalem, the bringing of the Ark up to Jerusalem, and the supplies for the temple that he has collected.

Samuel Chadwick said: "It is a wonder what God can do with a broken heart, if He gets all the pieces."

Joni Eareckson Tada says: "The Bible says that God can best use a heart that is broken and contrite. It's true in my life. When I'm self-sufficient and in control, my heart becomes a little hardened to others' needs. In fact, that self-sufficient attitude even hardens my heart toward God. Ah, but then he breaks it..." (*More Precious Than Silver*, Oct. 16)

Alan Nelson 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." (*Embracing Brokenness*, 96)

Verse 4: "So my spirit grows faint within me; my heart within me is dismayed."

Here in verse 4 we have the results of the enemy activity that has been described in verse 3, as far as David's response to this activity in his personal life. There are 2 things that he says: (1) "my spirit grows faint within me" and (2) "my heart within me is dismayed."

When you look at 1, you think that he is weak and weary. When you look at 2 you think that he is worried.

David is telling his 2-fold response to Absalom's activity in stealing away the kingdom: (1) "my spirit grows faint"—so what's the use; and (2) "my heart...is dismayed"—why is this happening!

Ron Allen, commenting on the phrase "So my spirit grows faint," says: "...my spirit was overwhelmed within me." The Hebrew verb used here is particularly strong and expressive of a sense of helplessness...It is a word aptly chosen to express his helplessness and frustration..."

Annie Johnson Flint wrote:

Pressed out of measure and pressed to all length;

Pressed so intently it seems beyond strength.

Pressed in body and pressed in soul;

Pressed in the mind till the dark surges roll;

Pressure by foes, pressure by friends;

Pressure on pressure, till life nearly ends.

Pressed into loving the staff and the rod;

Pressed into knowing no helper but God. (John R. Rice, *Poems That Preach*)

Let's sing a couple of verses as we worship and praise the Lord. I have chosen "**Rescue the Perishing**" by Fanny Crosby: "*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. Down in the human heart, Crushed by the tempter, 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."

February 26 — True Bottom Line (Mark)

I have never excelled at math; actually I've never done well in math! The joke in our household if there is an error in the checkbook my wife just looks at one of my entries and finds the mistake! As you know humor often is ground in truth. My wife Donna usually does find the mistake.

Several days ago I was "finishing up" my income taxes, using my trusty calculator trying to get the figures together. I was adding up a long column of numbers and hit 75 plus 5. Like I stated I am not really good in math, but I do know that 75 plus 5 equals 80. My calculator said 84. I thought I just had hit the wrong key, and put my entry in again, 75 plus 5 and tapped the = sign. Same answer 84. I thought this can't be right, but after a third try with the same 84 answer I was convinced!

The ironic thing about my calculator is that it looked so innocent and normal! It has all of the numeric keys along with all of the math functions. I got a sick feeling in my stomach. I literally have used this calculator for years and years! No wonder my check book entries have been wrong! Then I started wondering how many other math calculations I had entered correctly and had come out incorrect. Then I really had a sinking feeling: How many years had I done my income tax returns with this calculator?

I was drawn to a truth about deception. On the outside everything looks normal and correct, but on the inside something is terribly wrong. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians who were Believers, but were being deceived.

2 Corinthians 11:3, 14: "But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ...No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light."

Every generation of Believers is called upon to separate truth from deception. There are two ways to do this: by the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and by exposing ourselves to the truth which is found in the Bible, God's Word. The only way I was able to discern my calculator error, was the fact that I was taught years ago that 75 plus 5 really is 80. I was struck by the words of the Apostle ...*your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ*. Deception is a *mind* issue that leads to a *heart* issue.

Be vigilant, be prayerful, be spiritually cautious, and be constantly exposing yourself to God's Word.

February 27 — Precious Memories (Ps. 143:5-6)

Psalm 143:5: "I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done."

Psalm 143:6: "I spread out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land. Selah"

Verse 5: "I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done."

The 3 key words in verse 5 are: (1) "remember"; (2) "meditate"; and (3) "consider."

What David is saying here is: "This is my plan for handling the situation."

(1) "I remember the days of long ago"; (2) "I meditate on all your works"; and (3) "[I] consider what your hands have done."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: "His faith was rekindled and his spirit strengthened when he recalled the mighty works of the Lord in the past." (894)

David is saying: "I've seen and done a lot in the 64 years of my life!"

Carolyn Custis James says: "Our comfort is not in the mystery itself but in the revealed character of our God—a God who moves relentlessly through all that opposes him to secure our good and his glory." (*When Life and Beliefs Collide*, 94)

Yes, God miraculously works things together for good, for his glory, but also for our growth and the provision of grace to be victorious in the midst of it.

Verse 6: “I spread out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land. Selah”

The Psalmist says 2 things in verse 6: (1) “I spread out my hands to you” and (2) “my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.”

Psalm 42:1-2: “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living god. When can I go and meet with God?” (NIV).

Don Wyrzten says: “Spiritual pain is often the catalyst for change and growth. As I reach the end of my own limited resources, I grope toward God in desperation. He closes that great gap with His own presence and lets me know that He has not overlooked my need.” He then prays this prayer: “*O Lord, please look beyond my fault to see my need. My soul thirsts for You like a parched land. Refresh me with the rains of Your love.*”

The old cowboy said: “Another month without rain an’ we’ll have a herd of jerky on the hoof.” (Potter, *Cowboy Slang*, 59)

Psalm 87:7: “As they make music they will sing, ‘All my fountains are in you’” (NIV).

Let’s celebrate the fact our thirst has driven us to the springs of living water by singing a couple of verses of that great hymn. **“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. 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 shouting ‘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.”*

February 28 — The Time is Short (Ps. 143:7)

Psalm 143:7: “*Answer me quickly, O Lord; my spirit fails. Do not hide your face from me or I will be like those who go down to the pit.*”

Verse 7: “Answer me quickly, O Lord; my spirit fails. Do not hide your face from me or I will be like those who go down to the pit.”

This verse reminds me of the words of the Lord Jesus in John 9:4: “We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work” (NASB).

The 2 minute warning has already passed and everything is up for grabs.

There are 2 earnest requests here in verse 7: (1) “Answer me quickly” and (2) “Do not hide your face from me.”

Psalm 91:14-15: “The LORD says, ‘I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue them and honor them’” (NIV).

David is saying: “Answer me” and “Do not hide...from me.”

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).

He closes the verse with an illustration: “I will be like those who go down to the pit.” He said I will be like those in:

verse 3—“like those long dead.”

verse 6—“like a parched land.”

verse 7—“like those who go down to the pit.”

C.H. Spurgeon said: “If long delayed, the deliverance would come too late. The afflicted suppliant faints, and is ready to die. His life is ebbing out; each moment is of importance; it will soon be all over with him. No argument for speed can be more powerful than this.”

Andrew Murray said: “Beware in your prayer, above everything, of limiting God, not only by unbelief, but by fancying that you know what he can do.”

Let’s express our worship this morning by singing that hymn **“Work, for the Night Is Coming”:** *“Work, for the night is coming, Work through the morning hours; Work while the dew is sparkling, Work ‘mid springing flowers; Work while the day grows brighter, Under the glowing sun; Work, for the night is coming, When man’s work is done. Work, for the night is coming, Under the sunset skies; While their*

bright tints are glowing, Work, for daylight flies; Work, till the last beam fadeth Fadeth to shine no more; Work, while night is dark'ning, When man's work is o'er."

February 29 — Lord, I'm Trusting in You (Ps. 143:8)

Psalm 143:8: *"Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul."*

Verse 8: "Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul."

The urgency of the request sounds very similar to what the Apostle Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 1:8-9: "For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead" (NASB).

There are 2 requests here in verse 8: (1) tell me You love me and (2) "show me the way I should go."

It's a show and tell in reverse.

Micah 7:7-8: "As for me, I look to the Lord for help. I wait confidently for God to save me, and my God will certainly hear me. Do not gloat over me, my enemies! For though I fall, I will rise again. Though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be my light" (NLT).

Request #1: "Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love."

The Psalmist then states the reason for this request: "for I have put my trust in you."

Request #2: "Show me the way I should go."

The reason for this request: "for to you I lift up my soul."

In essence, David is saying: "I want to write a great final chapter."

It is my goal to finish strong!

When David says "Show me the way," he is repeating almost the words of young Samuel: "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening."

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 3:5-6: "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).

It seems appropriate that this morning we would sing Fanny Crosby's great hymns, **"He Hideth My Soul"**: *"a wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord, A wonderful Savior to me; He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock, Where rivers of pleasure I see. A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord, he taketh my burden away; He holdeth me up, and I shall not be moved, He giveth me strength as my day. He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock That shadows a dry, thirsty land; He hideth my life in the depths of His love And covers me there with His hand, and covers me there with His hand."*

March 1 — Lord, Rescue Me and Teach Me (Ps. 143:9-10)

Psalm 143:9: *"Rescue me from my enemies, O Lord, for I hide myself in you."*

Psalm 143:10: *"Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground."*

Verse 9: "Rescue me from my enemies, O Lord, for I hide myself in you."

Back in verse 8 he asked the Lord to tell me You love me and "show me the way I should go." Now in verse 9 we have: "Rescue me from my enemies, O Lord." The Psalmist then gives us the reason: "for I hide myself in you."

Psalm 140:1: "Rescue me, O Lord, from evil men; protect me from men of violence" (NIV).

Psalm 143:2: "Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me" (NIV).

Verse 10: "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground."

Back in verse 8 the 2 requests were: (1) tell me you love me and (2) “show me the way I should go.” In verse 9 the request was: (3) “Rescue me from my enemies, O Lord.” Now in verse 10 it is: (4) “Teach me to do your will” and (5) “lead me on level ground.”

Here in verse 10 the Psalmist says “Teach me to do your will.” He then follows this request with the reason: “for you are my God.”

Request #5: “may your good spirit lead me on level ground.”

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 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).

The second request, “may your good spirit lead me on level ground,” could well be a request similar to my own on the part of David: “Lord, at my age I don’t do stairs!”

Isaiah 43:18-19: “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?...” (NIV).

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

Philippians 3:13-14: “Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (NASB).

Vance Havner said it best: “He who waits on God loses no time.”

Isaiah 50:4-5: “The Sovereign LORD has given me his words of wisdom, so that I know what to say to all these weary ones. Morning by morning he awakens me and opens my understanding to his will. The Sovereign LORD has spoken to me, and I have listened. I do not rebel or turn away” (NLT).

Let’s worship our Lord for His provision and ultimate victory by singing Martin Luther’s great hymn, “**A Mighty Fortress Is Our God**”: *“A mighty Fortress is our God, A Bulwark never failing; Our Helper He, amid the flood Of mortal ills prevailing: For still our ancient foe Doth seek to work us woe; His craft and power are great, And armed with cruel hate, On earth is not His equal. Did we in our own strength confide, Our striving would be losing, Were not the right Man on our side, The Man of God’s own choosing: Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is he; Lord Sabaoth His name, From age to age the same, And He must win the battle.”*

March 2 — Lord, Bring Victory in the Conflict (Ps. 143:11-12)

Psalm 143:11: “*For your name’s sake, O Lord, preserve my life; in your righteousness, bring me out of trouble.*”

Psalm 143:12: “*In your unfailing love, silence my enemies; destroy all my foes, for I am your servant.*”

Verse 11: “For your name’s sake, O Lord, preserve my life; in your righteousness, bring me out of trouble.”

There are 2 requests here in verse 11: (1) “preserve my life; in your righteousness” and (2) “bring me out of trouble.”

This now is a list of 7 concise requests in this psalm: (1) tell me You love me; (2) “show me the way I should go”; (3) “Rescue me from my enemies”; (4) “Teach me to do your will”; (5) “lead me on level ground”; (6) preserve my life”; and (7) “bring me out of trouble.”

Don Wyrzten makes this personal prayer: “O Lord, fill me with Your Spirit today. Guide me, enable me, teach me, comfort me. I need help as I continue my pilgrimage.”

Chip Ingram says: “Right now you may feel like a nobody, but the God of the universe says, ‘I want you! I love you! I want to be your friend. I would like you on my team. Yes, I am pursuing you.’” (*I Am With You Always*, 88)

Verse 12: “In your unfailing love, silence my enemies; destroy all my foes, for I am your servant.”

This is the second time we had the occurrence of “unfailing love”: (1) verse 8—“Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love” and (2) verse 12—“In your unfailing love.”

The Psalmist asks the Lord 2 more things here in verse 12: (1) “silence my enemies” and (2) “destroy all my foes.”

You can add these last 2 petitions to the other 7 and you have a total of 9 petitions in verses 8-12.

He concludes with a reason for these 2 requests: “for I am your servant.” This is the second time we have had the occurrence of the word “servant.”

(1) verse 2—“Do not bring your servant into judgment” and (2) verse 12—“for I am your servant.”

There are 5 reasons when you put them all together that David made these requests: (1) “I have put my trust in you”—verse 8; (2) “to you I lift up my soul”—verse 8; (3) “I hide myself in you”—verse 9; (4) “you are my God”—verse 10; and (5) “I am your servant”—verse 12.

Warren Wiersbe says: “*Your spirit can begin to fail when you go through extended trials. Ask the Lord for help, and He will lead you through difficult times. Always stay open to the guidance and instruction of God’s Word. God will speak to you through Scripture as He leads you through your trial. Keep trusting Him, and He will accomplish what is best for you and what glorifies Him.*”

Let’s sing that great old hymn “**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.’ ‘Tis the grandest theme, 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 opprest, Go to Him for rest: ‘Our God is able to deliver thee.’”

March 3 — Trained for War (Ps. 144:1)

Psalm 144:1: “Praise be to the Lord my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle.”

David is probably about 65-years-old at this point. He has 5 years left in his journey. The saga of Absalom’s rebellion and stealing the kingdom from his father, David, still continues. These psalms are written from Mahanaim. This psalm is before the battle has been fought. Absalom is a fatality and now it’s time to return to his kingdom.

This is God’s answer and intervention after the prayer we studied in Psalm 143.

Verse 1: “Praise be to the Lord my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle.”

David begins this psalm with an outburst of praise: “Praise be to the Lord my Rock.” You will notice it is not “Praise be to the Lord my sand.”

Psalm 18:46: “The Lord lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God my Savior!” (NIV).

Then he says 2 things about the Lord that gives definition to the reason for praise. He’s the one: (1) “who trains my hands for war” and (2) “who trains...my fingers for battle.” I take it that the mention of the hands has to do with his sling and his sword, and his fingers have to do with the bow.

Don Wyrten says: “David was the General MacArthur of his day—a conquering hero. He begins this stirring psalm by remembering past victories and enemies who have been subdued under him. But who forged David’s career? Who gave him genius for military strategy? Who trained his hands for war and his fingers for battle? The Lord!”

“From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I” (Psa. 61:2 KJV).

*O sometimes the shadows are deep,
And rough seems the path to the goal;
And sorrows, how often they sweep
Like tempests down over the soul.*

*O then to the Rock let me fly,
To the Rock that is higher than I;
O then to the Rock let me fly,
To the Rock that is higher than I.*

(William O. Cushing, "The Rock That Is Higher Than I": 1876)

God is in the training business so that we are capable, in the power of the Spirit, to fight Satan and his forces, and to be trained in righteousness. He not only trains us, but provides the strength as well for victory.

Please join me as we conclude our worship in singing that great hymn of war, **"Lead On, O King Eternal"**: *"Lead on, O King Eternal, The day of marches has come; Henceforth in fields of conquest Your tents shall be our home, Through days of preparation Your grace has made us strong, And now, O King Eternal, We lift our battle song. Lead on, O King Eternal, Till sin's fierce war shall cease, and holiness shall whisper The sweet Amen of peace; For not with swords loud clashing, Nor roll of stirring drums, With deeds of love and mercy The heav'nly kingdom comes. Lead on, O King Eternal, We follow, now with fears; For gladness breaks like morning Where'er Your face appears; Your cross is lifted o'er us; We journey in its light: The crown awaits the conquest; Lead on, O God of might."*

March 4 — "It's a God Thing" (Donna)

"But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works" (Psa. 73:28).

All of us at times have difficulty fully expressing to God how awesome He is and how wonderful His works. The other day I was trying to find the words to express to God how amazing He is. The best I could come up with was, "Heavenly Father You out-did Yourself on this one!"

Following is a true story! Enjoy reading it and at the end I think you will agree with me, God out-did Himself!

Vinetta is the Mom of two employees of a company I serve as a corporate chaplain. Vinetta was recently relocated from Oregon to Tyler, Texas. Vinetta lived in Oregon with her husband and beloved dog Missy. Vinetta's husband passed away and because of health problems Vinetta needed to move to Tyler to be near her family. Her son and his wife flew to Oregon to bring back Vinetta to Tyler. Vinetta's dog Missy was blind and in poor health, so they had to put Missy to sleep before bringing Vinetta to Texas. Vinetta moved into a care facility in Tyler, Texas called The Heights (Touchstone Community). Her husband passing away, her dog put to sleep and flying to Tyler, Texas to be near family all within a couple weeks was very traumatic for Vinetta.

During a recent chaplain visit with Vinetta, she was telling me about her dog Missy and showed me a picture. I showed her a picture of my dog Pappi. Vinetta was making over Pappi's picture so I told her Pappi's story. Pappi lived in Oregon with my sister. Vinetta perked up and said, "Oh an Oregonian dog! I continued Pappi's story. My sister passed away and Pappi flew from Oregon to Tyler, Texas to be with family and is now our dog. Vinetta commented, "Pappi is just like me."

I asked the management at the Heights if I could bring Pappi to meet Vinetta. They actually encourage bringing pets. I took Oregonian now Tyler, Texas resident Pappi to meet Oregonian now Tyler, Texas resident Vinetta. Instant love. Pappi curled up on her bed right next to her and put his head on her arm. Pappi learned from the time my sister was so sick what to do.

Only God could have brought all this together!! It is amazing what great lengths God will go to care for His hurting children.

"Wonderful are His works and my soul knows it very well" (Psa. 139:14).

March 5 — The Lord Provides for Victory (Ps. 144:2)

Psalm 144:2: "He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me."

Verse 2: "He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me."

There are 6 graphic words the Psalmist uses in these first 2 verses to describe his relationship to the Lord. He is: (1) "my Rock"; (2) "my loving God"; (3) "my fortress"; (4) "my stronghold"; (5) "my deliverer"; and (6) "my shield."

The Psalmist uses the personal pronouns—I, me, my—10 times in these first 2 verses.

Psalm 18:1-3: "I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies" (NIV).

Don Wyrzten prays: "*O Lord, be my Rock, my Fortress, my Deliverer, and my Shield today. My battles are not as obvious as David's but they are just as deadly!*"

C.H. Spurgeon said: "Now our royal poet multiplies metaphors to extol his God."

Psalm 119:114: "You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word" (NIV).

Proverbs 2:7-8: "He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones" (NIV).

The Psalmist concludes verse 2 with: "in whom I take refuge, who subdues people under me."

Of course God is the One who gives the victory. David is going to be back on the throne for the final five!

1 Corinthians 15:57: "but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (NASB).

This verse has been a fresh reminder of God's protection and sovereign intervention. It makes you appreciate all He has done over the years.

A large old Bible, frequently used by Abraham Lincoln during the critical years of the Civil War, falls open easily to the 34th Psalm. If you examine that page, you will note that it is smudged at one spot. It seems obvious that the long, tapering fingers of the great emancipator often rested heavily on the fourth verse, which reads: "I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." (InfoSearch 3.51)

The question that should be uppermost in our minds is expressed by Isaac Watts in "**Am I a Soldier of the Cross?**" Join me in singing these four verses: "*Am I a soldier of the cross, A follow'r of the Lamb? And shall I fear to own His cause, Or blush to speak His name? Must I be carried to the skies On flow'ry beds of ease, While others fought to win the prize, And sailed thro' bloody seas? Are there no foes for me to face? Must I not stem the flood? Is this vile world a friend to grace, To help me on to God? Sure I must fight, if I would reign; increase my courage, Lord; I'll bear the toil, endure the pain, Supported by Thy Word.*"

March 6 — Overwhelmed by God's Care (Ps. 144:3-4)

Psalm 144:3: "*O Lord, what is man that you care for him, the son of man that you think of him?*"

Psalm 144:4: "*Man is like a breath; his days are like a fleeting shadow.*"

Verse 3: "O Lord, what is man that you care for him, the son of man that you think of him?"

Eugene Peterson paraphrases this verse: "I wonder why you care, GOD—why do you bother with us at all?"

Here the Psalmist turns to the Lord with a question. The question is overwhelming to him as he turns to the Lord to say, "Lord, what is man": (1) "that you care for him"; and (2) "the son of man that you think of him?"

Colossians 1:27: "to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (NASB).

John 15:4-5: "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" (NASB).

Don Wyrzten says: "What is almost incomprehensible to me is that this mighty God of war invites me—weak and wandering though I be—into His presence to receive the same kind of strength that He gave David. He promises to be my Shield and Deliverer in the spiritual battles I must fight. Like David, I can be a conquering hero...in Him!"

I think it would be good, in response to the Psalmists questions, for us to reflect on the evidence that He does care: (1) He loves us unconditionally. (2) He provides for all we need. (3) He has given us His Spirit. (4) He is preparing for us a place.

Verse 4: “Man is like a breath; his days are like a fleeting shadow.”

Eugene Peterson paraphrases this verse: “All we are is a puff of air; we’re like shadows in a campfire.”

The Psalmist uses 2 illustrations in this verse to describe man and his longevity: (1) “Man is like a breath” and (2) “his days are like a fleeting shadow.”

When you summarize it, we are “a breath” and a “fleeting shadow.”

Psalm 39:5: “You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is nothing before you. Each man’s life is but a breath. Selah” (NIV).

Psalm 102:11: “My days are like the evening shadow; I wither away like grass” (NIV).

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).

Bill Bright says it well: “None of us has a long time here on planet Earth. It’s kind of a staging ground. It’s our split second in eternity when we have an opportunity to invest our lives, our time, our talent and our treasure to help fulfill what our Lord came into this world to do and commissioned us to do. In fact, His last words before He ascended to be with the Father were: ‘Be my witnesses.’” (“A Farewell Tribute,” Campus Crusade for Christ)

In view of what we have learned in these 2 verses this morning, let’s take a moment to meditate upon what our attitude should be.

Psalm 39:4: “Show me, O Lord, my life’s end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life” (NIV).

The words that Moses spoke in Psalm 90:12: “Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom” (NIV).

Let’s turn to Fanny Crosby and let her lead us in our expression of worship by singing her great hymn **“Blessed Assurance”**: *“Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! O, what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood. Perfect submission, all is at rest, I in my Savior am happy and blest; Watching and waiting, looking above, Filled with His goodness, lost in His love. This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long; This is my story this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long.”*

March 7 — The Battle is the Lord’s (Ps. 144:5-6)

Psalm 144:5: “Part your heavens, O Lord, and come down; touch the mountains, so that they smoke.”

Psalm 144:6: “Send forth lightning and scatter [the enemies]; shoot your arrows and rout them.”

Verse 5: “Part your heavens, O Lord, and come down; touch the mountains, so that they smoke.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: But since God did care for him, he prayed for divine intervention in the war. He desired that the LORD would descend in glorious power. (895)

“O God, show up mightily!”

Psalm 104:32: “he who looks at the earth, and it trembles, who touches the mountains, and they smoke” (NIV).

There is a glorious day soon coming when He will split the skies and come to take His church home.

Verse 6: “Send forth lightning and scatter [the enemies]; shoot your arrows and rout them.”

There are 7 intense petitions expressed in these 2 verses—seven imperatives: (1) “Part”; (2) “come down”; (3) “touch”; (4) “Send forth”; (5) “scatter”; (6) “shoot”; and (7) “rout.”

We have “Part your heavens,” “come down,” “touch the mountains,” “Send forth lightning,” “scatter [the enemies],” “shoot your arrows,” and “rout them”—that is, “the enemies.”

David, throughout his whole career, has been a man of blood—a military man, a man trained for war.

Let’s go back to his first battle, the conflict in the Valley of Elah with Goliath.

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 our response this morning to these truths that we have studied by singing **“Onward, Christian Soldiers”**: *“Onward Christian soldiers, Marching as to war, With the cross of Jesus Going on before; Christ, the royal master, Leads against the foe; Forward into battle, See, His banners go. Onward, then, ye people, Join our happy throng, Blend with ours your voices In the triumph song; Glory, laud, and honor Unto Christ the king; This thru countless ages Men and angels sing. Onward, Christian soldiers, Marching as to war, With the cross of Jesus Going on before.”*

March 8 — Lord, Lead Us to Victory (Ps. 144:7-8)

Psalm 144:7: *“Reach down your hand from on high; deliver me and rescue me from the mighty waters, from the hands of foreigners”*

Psalm 144:8: *“whose mouths are full of lies, whose right hands are deceitful.”*

Verse 7: “Reach down your hand from on high; deliver me and rescue me from the mighty waters, from the hands of foreigners”

There are 3 petitions here in verse 7: (1) “Reach down”; (2) “deliver”; and (3) “rescue.”

(1) “Reach down your hand from on high”; (2) “deliver me”; (3) “rescue me” from 2 things: (1) “the mighty waters” and (2) “from the hands of foreigners.”

You could say “the mighty waters” refers to all forms of danger in war. “From the hands of foreigners”—the enemy comes in like a flood.

Psalm 18:16-17: “He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters. He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me” (NIV).

Verse 8: “whose mouths are full of lies, whose right hands are deceitful.”

Eugene Peterson paraphrases this verse: “Who lie through their teeth, who shake your hand then knife you in the back.”

In verse 8 the Psalmist gives us a 2-fold description of the “enemy”: (1) “[their] mouths are full of lies” and (2) “[their] right hands are deceitful.”

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).

Jeremiah 46:3-4: “Prepare your shields, both large and small, and march out for battle! Harness the horses, mount the steeds! Take your positions with helmets on! Polish your spears, put on your armor!” (NIV).

2 Timothy 2:3-4: “Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier” (NASB).

Let’s conclude our morning meditation by singing **“Sound the Battle Cry”**: *“Sound the battle cry! See, the foe is nigh. Raise the standard high For the Lord. Gird your armor on; Stand firm, ev’ryone. Rest your cause upon His holy Word. O Thou God of all, Hear us when we call; Help us one and all By Thy grace. When the battle’s done, And the vict’ry’s won, may we wear the crown Before Thy face. Rouse, then, soldiers; rally round the banner. Ready, steady, pass the word along. Onward, forward, shout aloud, ‘Hosanna!’ Christ is Captain of the mighty throng.”*

March 9 — I Have a Song When the War is Over (Ps. 144:9-10)

Psalm 144:9: *“I will sing a new song to you, O God; on the ten-stringed lyre I will make music to you,”*

Psalm 144:10: “to the One who gives victory to kings, who delivers his servant David from the deadly sword.”

Verse 9: “I will sing a new song to you, O God; on the ten-stringed lyre I will make music to you,”

My response to your sovereign intervention, Lord, I will do 2 things: (1) “I will sing a new song to you” and (2) “I will make music to you.”

Psalm 33:3: “Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy” (NIV).

Psalm 40:3: “He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord” (NIV).

Psalm 96:1: “Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth” (NIV).

Revelation 5:9: “And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation’” (NASB).

Revelation 14:3: “And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth” (NASB).

I find myself singing at this point: “Holy, holy, is what the angels sing, And I expect to help them make the courts of heaven ring; But when I sing redemption’s story, they will fold their wings, For angels never felt the joys that our salvation brings.”

Ron Allen says: “Have you ever stopped to consider that the center of your Bible is a hymnal? The book of Psalms is a book of music. It was first the music of ancient Israel; now it is the music for all the church to sing, and from which we continue the art of ever making new music to the Lord of Song.”

Don Wyrzten prays: “*O Lord, even before You do Your next exciting work in my life, may I burst forth in creative worship of Your mighty name and power!*”

Verse 10: “to the One who gives victory to kings, who delivers his servant David from the deadly sword.”

This “new song” David is going to sing is to the Lord and is described in 2 ways here in verse 10. This could very well be part of the musical composition: (1) “to the One who gives victory to kings” and (2) “to the One...who delivers his servant David from the deadly sword.”

David will take time to glorify God and to remember the One who is responsible for the victory he is experiencing.

When we see the final phrase in the verse, “who delivers his servant David from the deadly sword,” it reminds us of the military conflict that is described in 2 Samuel 21:15-17. This is late in David’s life and military career.

2 Samuel 21:15-17: “Once again there was a battle between the Philistines and Israel. David went down with his men to fight against the Philistines, and he became exhausted. And Ishbi-Benob, one of the descendants of Rapha, whose bronze spearhead weighed three hundred shekels and who was armed with a new [sword], said he would kill David. But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to David’s rescue; he struck the Philistine down and killed him. Then David’s men swore to him, saying, ‘Never again will you go out with us to battle, so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished’” (NIV).

Let’s celebrate David’s victory this morning as we sing verses 1 and 2 of **“Faith Is the Victory”**: *“Encamped along the hills of light, Ye Christian soldiers, rise, And press the battle ere the night Shall veil the glowing skies. Against the foe in vales below Let all our strength be hurried; Faith is the victory, we know, That overcomes the world. His banner over us is love, Our sword the Word of God; We tread the road the saints above With shouts of triumph trod. By faith they, like a whirlwind’s breath, Swept on o’er ev’ry field; The faith by which they conquered death Is still our shining shield.”*

March 10 — Victory Will Protect Our Families (Ps. 144:11-12)

Psalm 144:11: “Deliver me and rescue me from the hands of foreigners whose mouths are full of lies, whose right hands are deceitful.”

Psalm 144:12: “Then our sons in their youth will be like well-nurtured plants, and our daughters will be like pillars carved to adorn a palace.”

Verse 11: “Deliver me and rescue me from the hands of foreigners whose mouths are full of lies, whose right hands are deceitful.”

David asks 2 things in verse 11: (1) “Deliver me” and (2) “rescue me.” He then follows this up with the same 2-fold description of “the enemy”: (1) “[their] mouths are full of lies” and (2) “[their] right hands are deceitful.”

He said this same thing about the enemy back in verse 8.

These enemies described by David are certainly a perfect picture of Satan and his activity toward us. The Lord Jesus said of Satan in John 8:44: “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies” (NASB).

He’s not only the father of lies, he is also the master of deceit.

2 Corinthians 11:13: “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light” (NASB).

Lies and deception are the key words in Satan’s kingdom.

1 John 4:4 says: “You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world” (NASB).

Verse 12: “Then our sons in their youth will be like well-nurtured plants, and our daughters will be like pillars carved to adorn a palace.”

What we have in these remaining verses are the results of the Lord’s blessing and His care.

The Psalmist is going to focus on the family blessing in verse 12—referring to the “sons” and “daughters.”

2 Corinthians 6:17-18: “‘Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,’ says the Lord Almighty” (NASB).

Derek Kidner says: “The sons, the young olive shoots of 128:3, are now pictured as sturdy, well-established saplings, and the daughters as the very picture of statuesque elegance and strength, ‘like sculptured pillars at the corners of a palace’ (NEB).”

Ron Allen says: “A new generation is needed, made up of sturdy boys and strong, fine girls who can work together to build a better nation.”

Let’s continue our singing of verses 3 and 4 of **“Faith Is the Victory”** as we conclude our meditation for the morning: *“On ev’ry hand the foe we find Drawn up in dread array; Let tents 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. To him that overcomes the foe, White raiment shall be giv’n; Before the angels he shall know His name confessed in heav’n. Then onward from the hills of light, Our hearts with love aflame, We’ll vanquish all the hosts of night, In Jesus’ conquering name*

March 11 — Mountains and Valleys (Mark)

My wife Donna and I were at a Pastor’s retreat in South Carolina. We visited over lunch with an Anglican Priest and his wife. They were a delightful couple from Canada. His wife told us their story.

They were married when he was 31 years old and she was 19. She told us that when she took him home to meet her mother, her mother cried. When he took her home to meet his mother, his mother laughed!

Their “meeting mother” stories gave me a new appreciation for Romans 12:15.

Romans 12:15: “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.”

This Priest had started seminary at 54 and had his first church at 58! He was now retiring at 74 and asked us to pray for his future ministry, and what and where God wanted him to serve.

Recently I had a day of rejoicing and weeping. I presided at a funeral in the afternoon and a wedding that evening. Both of these events were with wonderful families. It was a day of both weeping with those who *weep and rejoicing with those who rejoice*. It was an emotion-filled day.

One of the many reasons I enjoy reading and studying the Gospels, is a chance to get a glimpse of Christ weeping in a graveyard, and rejoicing and joining in the celebration at a wedding. Jesus experienced the emotions of life and is still doing that today. Our joys are His joys and our sorrows are His sorrows. He not only feels our pain, He feels our joy as well. He truly is the ultimate fulfillment of Scripture that commands us to *rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep*.

March 12 — Provision and Prosperity (Ps. 144:13-15)

Psalm 144:13: *“Our barns will be filled with every kind of provision. Our sheep will increase by thousands, by tens of thousands in our fields;”*

Psalm 144:14: *“our oxen will draw heavy loads. There will be no breaching of walls, no going into captivity, no cry of distress in our streets.”*

Psalm 144:15: *“Blessed are the people of whom this is true; blessed are the people whose God is the Lord.”*

Verse 13: “Our barns will be filled with every kind of provision. Our sheep will increase by thousands, by tens of thousands in our fields;”

In verse 12 he talked about his sons and daughters. Now in verse 13 he is talking about barns and sheep.

Warren Wiersbe says: *“God’s people ought to be joyful—expressing personal, national and family joy. Our joy is founded on what God does and who He is. Rejoice in the Lord today for all of His goodness, grace and mercy toward you in Christ Jesus.”*

Proverbs 2:7-9: “He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones. Then you will understand what is right and just and fair—every good path” (NIV).

Psalm 65:11-13: “You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance. The grasslands of the desert overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness. The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for joy and sing” (NIV).

Verse 14: “our oxen will draw heavy loads. There will be no breaching of walls, no going into captivity, no cry of distress in our streets.”

Here in verse 14 he now adds the “oxen.” We have: (1) “our sons in their youth will be like well-nurtured plants”—verse 12; (2) “our daughters will be like pillars carved to adorn a palace”—verse 12; (3) “Our barns will be filled with every kind of provision”—verse 13; (4) “Our sheep will increase by thousands, by tens of thousands”—verse 13; and now (5) “our oxen will draw heavy loads”—verse 14.

David, in regards to his concerns for national security, speaks of 3 specific things. “There will be”: (1) “no breaching of the walls”; (2) “no going into captivity”; and (3) “no cry of distress in our streets.”

Verse 15: “Blessed are the people of whom this is true; blessed are the people whose God is the Lord.”

The Psalmist repeats the blessing twice: (1) “Blessed are the people of whom this is true” and (2) “blessed are the people whose God is the Lord.”

The phrase “of whom this is true” is the population which has just been described. The prosperity of this people is found in verses 12-14.

The final statement of blessing is obvious: “blessed are the people whose God is the Lord.” He is the One who provides the blessing that comes on the heels of obedience. He is the Jehovah Jireh—the Lord will provide.

Philippians 4:19: “And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (NASB).

Don Wyrzten concludes his meditation with a prayer: *“O Lord, I long for Your blessing of world peace. Take control of our economy, our national security, and international affairs, so that all nations will know that You are our God!”*

Join me with me in singing verses 1, 3 and 4 of **“God Will Take Care of You”**: *“Be not dismayed whate’er betide, God will take care of you; Beneath His wings of love abide, God will take care of you. All you may need He will provide, God will take care of you; Nothing you ask will be denied, God will take care of you. No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you; Lean, weary one, upon His breast, God will take care of you. God will take care of you, Through ev’ry day, o’er all the way; He will take care of you, God will take care of you.”*

March 13 — Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow (Ps. 147:1)

Psalm 147:1: *“Praise the Lord. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him!”*

Verse 1: *“Praise the Lord. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him!”*

Eugene Peterson paraphrases the verse: *“Hallelujah! It’s a good thing to sing praise to our God; praise is beautiful, praise is fitting.”*

The Psalmist says 3 things about praising the Lord in verse 1. He says it is: (1) “good”; (2) “pleasant”; and (3) “fitting.”

Psalm 96:2-3: *“Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples”* (NIV).

Psalm 135:3: *“Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praise to his name, for that is pleasant”* (NIV).

Psalm 33:1: *“Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him”* (NIV).

Ron Allen’s personal translation of verse 1 is: *“Hallelu Yah! How very good it is to sing praises to our God, How pleasant and beautiful his praise!”*

This praise and worship is probably sung and expressed during the dedication of the walls during Nehemiah’s time.

C.H. Spurgeon said: *“The flow of the broad river of the Book of Psalms ends in a cataract of praise. The present Psalm begins and ends with Hallelujah. Jehovah and happy praise should ever be associated in the mind of a believer.”*

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.”*

Willie Nelson said: *“When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around.”*

Someone has said: *“Praise is the language of sinners set free.”* Someone else said: *“Praise is inward delight turned into outward demonstration.”*

We are commanded 7 times in Psalm 147 to *“Praise the Lord.”*

Let’s get started right away by singing another great hymn written by Fanny Crosby, **“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! Jesus, our blessed Redeemer! Heav’nly portals loud with hosannas ring! Jesus, Savior, reigneth forever and ever; Crown Him! Crown Him! Prophet and Priest and King! Christ is coming! Over the world victorious, Pow’r and glory unto the Lord belong: Praise Him! Praise Him! Tell of his excellent greatness; Praise Him! Praise Him! Ever in joyful song!”*

March 14 — The Lord is Close to the Brokenhearted (Ps. 147:2-3)

Psalm 147:2: *“The Lord builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the exiles of Israel.”*

Psalm 147:3: *“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”*

Verse 2: “The Lord builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the exiles of Israel.”

The 2 key verbs in the passage are: (1) “builds up” and (2) “gathers.”

“The Lord builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the exiles of Israel.”

Zechariah 2:5: “Then I, myself, will be a protective wall of fire around Jerusalem, says the Lord. And I will be the glory inside the city!” (NLT).

This is a time, as the exiles come home to Jerusalem, of building the temple, the walls, and their homes.

Verse 3: “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”

In verse 2 we had the verbs: “builds up” and “gathers.” Now in verse 3 we have the verbs “heals” and “binds up.”

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

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

Isaiah 61:1: “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners” (NIV).

Yes, the Lord feels deep compassion for us. We are “brokenhearted” over our sin and our adversities and He’s there to give that healing touch.

Don Wyrzten says: “When we honestly face our grief or our sin and submit it to the Lord, He responds in grace by forgiving and healing. This profound, personal work then becomes the basis for authentic praise. I face an extravagant future with the Lord in glory, when I will see Mom and Karen’s dad again. We’ll have a lot of catching up to do!”

Wyrzten then prays: *“Praise the Lord! I join in praising Your holy, precious name. I praise You for healing the brokenhearted and for setting us free to sing praise!”*

Brennan Manning says: “Pain is the crucible in which one is made tender.” (*The Wisdom of Tenderness*, 126)

Ruth Paxson in *Life on the Highest Plane* says: “To master my will he had to melt my heart.”

Let’s express our praise and worship by singing **“Does Jesus Care?”**: *“Does Jesus care when my heart is pained Too deeply for mirth and song; As the burdens press and the cares distress, And the way grows weary and long? Does Jesus care when I’ve said goodbye To the dearest on earth to me, And my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks, Is it aught to Him? Does He see? O yes, He cares; I know He cares, his heart is touched with my grief; When the days are weary, the long nights dreary, I know my Savior cares.”*

March 15 — The Lord is the Creator and Sustainer (Ps. 147:4-5)

Psalm 147:4: *“He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name.”*

Psalm 147:5: *“Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.”*

Verse 4: “He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name.”

Whereas in verse 2 He “builds up” and “gathers,” in verse 3 He “heals” and “binds up.” Now in verse 4 He “determines” and “calls.”

(1) “He determines the number of the stars” and (2) “He...calls them [that is, the stars] each by name.”

I love the way Eugene Peterson paraphrases verse 4: “He counts the stars and assigns each a name” (NIV).

Isaiah 40:26: “Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing” (NIV).

Matthew 10:29-30: “Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered” (NASB).

Warren Wiersbe says: “*The God who numbers and names the stars knows about your broken heart and can heal it—if you give all the pieces to Him...*”

Verse 5: “Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.”

There are 3 things the Psalmist says about the Lord here: (1) “[He is] Great”; (2) “[He is] mighty”; and (3) “his understanding has no limit.”

Luke 4:36: “Amazed, the people exclaimed, ‘What authority and power this man’s words possess! Even evil spirits obey him, and they flee at his command!’” (NLT).

Isaiah 45:15: “Truly, O God of Israel, our Savior, you work in strange and mysterious ways” (NLT).

Jeremiah 10:6: “LORD, there is no one like you! For you are great, and your name is full of power” (NLT).

Romans 4:20-21: “Abraham never wavered in believing God’s promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. He was absolutely convinced that God was able to do anything he promised” (NLT).

This verse contains 3 of God’s attributes: (1) “[He is] Great”—therefore He is sovereign; (2) “[He is] mighty”—so He is omnipotent; and (3) “his understanding has no limit”—He is omniscient, He knows everything.

Jeremiah 32:27: “I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?” (NIV).

Yes, the Psalmist exalts our Lord: “Great is our Lord and mighty in power; His understanding has no limit.”

As an act of worship as we conclude our meditation for the morning, let’s sing “**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, Pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise. O tell of His might, O sing of His grace, Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space. His chariots of wrath the deep thunder clouds form, And dark is His path on the wings of the storm. 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. Frail children of dust, and 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.*”

March 16 — The Lord Cares for the Ones Who Turn to Him (Ps. 147:6-7)

Psalm 147:6: “*The Lord sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground.*”

Psalm 147:7: “*Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; make music to our God on the harp.*”

Verse 6: “The Lord sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground.”

The Lord does 2 things in verse 6: (1) “[He] sustains” and (2) “[He] casts...to the ground.”

We have seen thus far: (1) verse 2—He “builds up” and “gathers”; (2) verse 3—He “heals” and “binds up”; (3) verse 4—He “determines” and “calls”; and now (4) verse 6—He “sustains” and “casts...to the ground.”

1 Peter 5:5: “...be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble’” (NKJV).

David McCasland said: “When ‘the God of all grace’ (v.10) controls our lives, He can transform interruptions into opportunities, mistakes into successes, pride into humility, and suffering into strength. That’s the amazing power of God. That’s the evidence of His grace!” (*Our Daily Bread*, Sept. 9, 2003)

Isaiah 14:24: “The LORD Almighty has sworn this oath: ‘It will all happen as I have planned. It will come about according to my purposes’” (NLT).

Isaiah 14:27: “The LORD Almighty has spoken—who can change his plans? When his hand moves, who can stop him?” (NLT).

Psalm 69:32: “The humble will see their God at work and be glad. Let all who seek God’s help live in joy” (NLT).

Fenelon said: "The most important thing is humility. Humility gives you a teachable spirit that makes everything easier... Seek to follow Jesus along the road of humility that He has taken. The greatest profit which you can gather from an experience of your weakness is to let your frailties help you become more humble and obedient." (*The Seeking Heart*, 28)

Chip Ingram said: "...humility is a biblical, honest appraisal of ourselves. It means we come to relationships with a focus on others and not on ourselves." (*Holy Transformation*, 43)

In other words, humility has little to do with how you feel and a lot to do with where your focus is and how you treat others.

Verse 7: "Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; make music to our God on the harp."

Here in verse 7 we are to do 2 things: (1) "sing" and (2) "make music" to the Lord. We are to do it "with thanksgiving" and "on the harp."

Joni Eareckson Tada said: "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 crushing heartaches, injustice, treachery, slander, and scores of other intolerable situations."

We have been commanded by the Psalmist to sing and to praise the Lord. I would like for us to sing verse 1 of my favorite hymns, "**Day by Day**": *"Day by day and with each passing moment, Strength find to meet my trails 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."*

March 17 — The Lord Feeds His Own (Ps. 147:8-9)

Psalm 147:8: "He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills."

Psalm 147:9: "He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call."

Verse 8: "He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills."

The Lord is here presented as doing 3 things. He: (1) "covers"; (2) "supplies"; and (3) "makes." "He covers the sky," "he supplies the earth," and "[He] makes grass grow."

You cannot read a verse like this without understanding that the Lord has not only an interest, but also a hands-on administration of His entire creation.

This takes us back to verse 4 where we read: "He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name."

Verse 9: "He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call."

Now we add to the other 3 activities of the Lord in verse 8. He not only "covers," "supplies," and "makes" but He also "provides."

"He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call."

The Lord truly is Jehovah Jireh—the One who provides.

This verse reminds me of the promise in Matthew 7:7: "Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you" (NASB).

William Plumer said: "All these young creatures are helpless, and unable to move from the nest for some time after they are hatched. But God provides for them by giving to their parents a tender, natural affection, which is the more remarkable, because they are ravenous, and live very much by prey."

Let's conclude our worship this morning by singing verse 2 of "**Day by Day**": *"Ev'ry day the Lord Himself is near me With a special mercy for each hour; All my cares He fain would bear, and cheer me, he whose name is Counsellor and Pow'r. The protection of His child and treasure Is a charge that on Himself he laid; As your days, your strength shall be in measure, This the pledge to me He made."*

March 18 — Watch Where You Are Looking (Pearl)

Psalm 119:18: "Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law" (NIV).

Psalm 119:37: "Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word" (NIV).

"Open my eyes that I may see Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me; Place in my hands the wonderful key That shall unclasp and set me free. Silently now I wait for Thee, Ready, my God, Thy will to see; Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!"

While having my eyes checked by our optometrist, Dr. Hooper, I complained of tired, itchy eyes. Always the sensible, kind doctor, he suggested I purchase a trial-size of Johnson's® baby shampoo, put a very small amount on a warm, damp washcloth and gently wash the eyelashes. He said to be careful never to even brush across the eyeball.

It does work!

The eyes are one of the great masterpieces of God's creation.

Ephesians 1:18: "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (NASB).

Hebrews 12:2: "Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever" (MSG).

Be careful little eyes what you see,

Be careful little eyes what you see,

There's a Father up above looking down in love,

So be careful little eyes what you see. (source unknown)

"Open our eyes, Lord; We want to see Jesus, To reach out and touch Him, And say that we love Him. Open our ears, Lord, And help us to listen. Open our eyes, Lord; We want to see Jesus."

Surrender afresh your eyes to the Lord. Join Job who says: "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl" (Job 31:1 NIV).

Accept the counsel of David: "The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes" (Ps. 19:8 NIV).

Let's conclude our worship by singing a verse of **"Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus"**: *"O soul, are you weary and troubled? No light in the darkness you see? There's light for a look at the Savior, And life more abundant and free! 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."*

March 19 — Lord, I'm Putting My Hope in Your Unfailing Love (Ps. 147:10-11)

Psalm 147:10: *"His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of a man;"*

Psalm 147:11: *"the Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love."*

Verse 10: "His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of a man;"

Eugene Peterson paraphrases verse 10: "He's not impressed with horsepower; the size of our muscles means little to him."

The Psalmist moves to 2 more issues, with regard to the Lord. Things that have to do with: (1) "His pleasure" and (2) "his delight."

In this verse we learn: (1) "His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor" (2) "his delight in the legs of a man."

John Phillips said: "God takes no delight in military might (as symbolized by the strength of a horse) or in marching armies (as symbolized by the legs of a man). God is not impressed by big battalions."

Verse 11: "the Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love."

This is the key verse to this particular Psalm. We have the negative statement in verse 10: The Lord does not take pleasure or delight in the "strength of the horse" or the "legs of a man." What He

“delights in” now, from the positive point of view, is: (1) “those who fear him” and (2) “those...who put their hope in his unfailing love.”

The big question is, are we those kind of people so we qualify for the Lord’s delight?

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).

Jeremiah 9:23-24: “This is what the Lord says: ‘Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight’ declares the Lord” (NIV).

Are you one who fears Him? You might be asking, how do I know what that means? To fear the Lord means that I reverence Him, respect Him, repent when I fail, and respond to what brings Him pleasure.

Job 28:28: “And he said to man, ‘The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding’” (NIV).

Are you one who is putting your “hope in his unfailing love”?

Get the picture in your mind of God as an old man running to get His arms around the prodigal as he returns home.

Lamentations 3:21-26: “Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: 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. I say to myself, ‘The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.’ The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord” (NIV).

Don Wyrzten prays: “*Praise the Lord! I thank You and praise You for delighting in me. I place my confidence in Your glorious grace and unfailing love today.*”

John Ortberg tells this story:

At the end of her remarkable life, as she lay on her deathbed, someone asked her, “Miss Mears, if you had it to do all over again, would you do anything differently?”

She thought for a moment. “If I had it all to do over again—I would have trusted Christ more.”

Maybe God is calling you to trust him at some point of frustration in your life. Trust him. No one ever regretted trusting Christ more—ever. (*If You Want to Walk on Water, You’ve Got to Get Out of the Boat*, 88)

Let’s conclude our meditation and time of worship by singing the third verse of “**Day by Day**”:
“Help me then in ev’ry tribulation So to trust Thy promises, O Lord, That I lose not faith’s sweet consolation Offered me within Thy holy Word. Help, me, Lord, when toil and trouble meeting. E’er to take, as from a father’s hand, One by one, the days, the moments fleeting, Till I reach the promised land.”

March 20 — I Am Praising You for Strength and Blessing (Ps. 147:12-13)

Psalm 147:12: “*Extol the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion,*”

Psalm 147:13: “*for he strengthens the bars of your gates and blesses your people within you.*”

Verse 12: “Extol the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion,”

We are commanded to do 2 things in verse 12: (1) “Extol the Lord” and (2) “praise your God.”

John Milton said: “On earth join all ye creatures to extol Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.”

Bruce Wilkinson records the martyrdom of Polycarp:

“Father of Your beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the knowledge of You, I bless You that You have counted me worthy of this day and this hour, that I might be in the number of the martyrs.

“Among these may I be received before You today in a rich and acceptance sacrifice, as You have beforehand prepared and revealed.

“Wherefore I also praise You also for everything: I bless You: I glorify You, through whom, with Him, in the Holy Spirit, be glory unto You both now and for the ages to come. Amen.”

Eusebius adds: “When he had offered up his amen and had finished his prayer, the firemen lighted the fire.” (*Closer Walk*, 321)

Verse 13: “for he strengthens the bars of your gates and blesses your people within you.”

The Psalmist now gives 2 reasons in verse 13 for extolling the Lord and praising your God: (1) “for he strengthens the bars of your gates” and (2) “[he] blesses your people within you.”

Here in verse 13, we have 2 things: (1) “he strengthens” and (2) “[he] blesses.”

C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch say: “The holy city has again risen out of its ruins; it now once more has gates which can stand open in the broad daylight, and can be closed and bolted when the darkness comes on for the security of the municipality that is only just growing into power... The blessing of God again rests upon the children of the sacred metropolis.”

Don Wyrzten says:

Here the psalmist exhorts the inhabitants of the Holy City to praise the Lord. I can hear the harmony of soprano, alto, tenor, and bass as the “voices” blend in a choral anthem of peace.

Soprano—The high notes soar: “He strengthens the bars of your gates” (v. 13). These people need not fear invasion or attack. The Lord Himself stands at the gate to turn back any who should not enter.

Alto—Providing mellow, rich support is another voice: “And blesses your people within you” (v. 13). Blessing comes from His presence within. “Be born in me tonight,” I echo.

Let’s conclude our meditation this morning by singing verse 1 of that great hymn by John W. Peterson, “**Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul**”: *“O what a wonderful wonderful day, Day I will never forget; After I’d wandered in darkness away, Jesus my Savior I met. O what a tender, compassionate Friend He met the need of my heart; Shadows dispelling, With joy I am telling, He made all the darkness depart! Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, When at the cross the Savior made me whole; My sins were washed away And my night was turned to day Heaven came down and glory filled my soul! Heaven came down and glory filled my soul!”*

March 21 — I’m Praising You For Peace and Provision (Ps. 147:14-15)

Psalm 147:14: “He grants peace to your borders and satisfies you with the finest of wheat.”

Psalm 147:15: “He sends his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly.”

Verse 14: “He grants peace to your borders and satisfies you with the finest of wheat.”

Why are we to “extol the Lord”? Why are we to “praise [our] God”? We have a total of 4 reasons: (1) “he strengthens the bars of your gates”; (2) “he...blesses your people within you”; (3) “He grants peace to your borders”; and (4) “He...satisfies you with the finest of wheat.”

“He grants peace” and “He...satisfies.” What an incredible statement of what God does when we receive the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord as Savior and experience eternal salvation.

“He grants peace” and “He...satisfies” the human heart.

Verse 15: “He sends his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly.”

With email and telecommunications we can see a relevancy to this particular verse: “He sends his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly.”

Isaiah 58:8-9: “If you do these things, your salvation will come like the dawn. Yes, your healing will come quickly. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the LORD will protect you from behind. Then when you call, the LORD will answer. “Yes, I am here,” he will quickly reply...” (NLT).

Warren Wiersbe says: “*God’s Word runs and accomplishes His will. It melts and opens the way. And it blesses all who will receive it, obey it and trust it. God desires that you spend time daily appropriating the riches of His Word. Do you invest God’s Word in your life?*”

Don Wyrzten prays: “*Praise the Lord! I thank You for the gift of Your Word which sustains me. But I thank You even more for the gift of Your Son, Immanuel—God with us!*”

Let's conclude our meditation and worship this morning by singing verse 2 of **"Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul"**: *"Born of the Spirit with life from above Into God's family divine, Justified fully thru Calvary's love, O what a standing is mine! And the transaction so quickly was made When as a sinner I came, Took the offer Of grace He did proffer He saved me, O praise His dear name! Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, When at the cross the Savior made me whole; My sins were washed away And my night was turned to day Heaven came down and glory filled my soul! Heaven came down and glory filled my soul!"*

March 22 — I Praise You as Creator and Controller of Nature (Ps. 147:16-18)

Psalm 147:16: *"He spreads the snow like wool and scatters the frost like ashes."*

Psalm 147:17: *"He hurls down his hail like pebbles. Who can withstand his icy blast?"*

Psalm 147:18: *"He sends his word and melts them; he stirs up his breezes, and the waters flow."*

Verse 16: "He spreads the snow like wool and scatters the frost like ashes."

Eugene Peterson paraphrases this verse: "He spreads snow like a white fleece, he scatters frost like ashes."

The Lord does 2 things in this verse: (1) "He spreads" and (2) "He...scatters."

Job 37:6-13: "He says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth,' and to the rain shower, 'Be a mighty downpour.' So that all men he has made may know his work, he stops every man from his labor. The animals take cover; they remain in their dens. The tempest comes out from its chamber, the cold from the driving winds. The breath of God produces ice, and the broad waters become frozen. He loads the clouds with moisture; he scatters his lightning through them. At his direction they swirl around over the face of the whole earth to do whatever he commands them. He brings the clouds to punish men, or to water his earth and show his love" (NIV).

Don Wyrzten says: "The greatness of the Lord is perceived by the effect of His Word. He speaks, and the elements of nature obey."

You will notice in these remaining verses of the Psalm, His word is uppermost and dominant in these final statements. He mentions "his command" and "his word" back in verse 15. Then we are going to see "his word" in verse 18, "his word" in verse 19, and "his laws" in verse 20.

Verse 17: "He hurls down his hail like pebbles. Who can withstand his icy blast?"

The Lord "spreads" and "scatters" in verse 16 and "He hurls down" in verse 17. Then there is a very pointed question: "Who can withstand his icy blast?"

The answer is no one!

The Psalmist speaks about the "the snow," "the frost," and the "hail." He then uses 3 illustrations:

(1) "snow like wool"; (2) "frost like ashes"; and (3) "hail like pebbles."

Verse 18: "He sends his word and melts them; he stirs up his breezes, and the waters flow."

In verse 18 he does 2 things: (1) "He sends" and (2) "he stirs up."

(1) "He sends his word" and (2) "he stirs up his breezes."

There is a 2-fold response: (1) When "He sends his word [it] melts them" and (2) when "he stirs up his breezes...the waters flow."

It almost sounds like the disciples when they come off 10-foot waves onto glassy sea after the Lord said "peace be still." They ask a question: "Who is this that even the winds and the waves obey his voice?"

Let's conclude our meditation this morning by singing verse 3 of **"Heaven Came Down and Glory Filled My Soul"**: *"Now I've a hope that will surely endure After the passing of time; I have a future in heaven for sure, There in those mansions sublime. And it's because of that wonderful day When at the cross I believed; Riches eternal And blessings supernal From His precious hand I received. Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, When at the cross the Savior made me whole; My sins were washed away And my night was turned to day Heaven came down and glory filled my soul! Heaven came down and glory filled my soul!"*

March 23 — Chosen by God for Special Privilege (Ps. 147:19-20)

Psalm 147:19: "He has revealed his word to Jacob, his laws and decrees to Israel."

Psalm 147:20: "He has done this for no other nation; they do not know his laws. Praise the Lord."

Verse 19: "He has revealed his word to Jacob, his laws and decrees to Israel."

In verse 19 we have just 1 action described on the part of the Lord: "He has revealed."

"He has revealed his word to Jacob, his laws and decrees to Israel."

We have 3 references to the scripture. The: (1) "word"; (2) "laws"; and (3) "decrees."

Don Wyrzten says: "The most powerful display of His grace was the gift of His written Word."

Isaiah 50:4: "The Sovereign LORD has given me his words of wisdom, so that I know what to say to all these weary ones. Morning by morning he wakens me and opens my understanding to his will" (NLT).

Isaiah 50:5: "The Sovereign LORD has spoken to me, and I have listened. I do not rebel or turn away" (NLT).

Verse 20: "He has done this for no other nation; they do not know his laws. Praise the Lord."

What "He has done," mentioned here in verse 20, takes us back to verse 19: "He has revealed his word to Jacob, his laws and decrees to Israel."

There are 2 things we can gather from verse 20: (1) Jacob and Israel are special and (2) they are His people. "They do not know his laws" refers to the other nations of the world.

Isaiah 61:10: "I am overwhelmed with joy in the LORD my God! For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness..." (NLT).

John Wesley wrote:

I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God and returning to God, just hovering over the great gulf 'till, a few moments hence, I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing—the way to heaven, how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach me the way. For this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God!

Don Wyrzten prays: "O Lord, I praise You for the gift of Your written Word which sustains and quickens my spirit."

J.B. Phillips paraphrases Hebrews 4:12: "For the Word that God speaks is alive and active; it cuts more keenly than any two-edged sword: it strikes through to the place where soul and spirit meet, to the innermost intimacies of a man's being: it exposes the very thoughts and motives of a man's heart."

Isaiah 40:10: "Yes, the Sovereign LORD is coming in all his glorious power. He will rule with awesome strength. See, he brings his reward with him as he comes" (NLT).

Isaiah 41:16b: "...And the joy of the LORD will fill you to overflowing. You will glory in the Holy One of Israel" (NLT).

As we come to the conclusion of Psalm 147, there are 24 things the Lord does for us—that is the reason for the Psalm. It opens with "Praise the Lord" and it closes with "Praise the Lord." There are 24 things He does for us: "builds up," "gathers," "heals," "binds up," "determines," "calls," "sustains," "casts to the ground," "covers," "supplies," "makes grass grow," "provides food," "strengthens," "blesses," "grants peace," "satisfies," "sends," "spreads," "scatters," "hurls down," "sends," "stirs up," "reveals," and "done."

What a great word to end with this morning! The Lord has done what needs to be done. He has made full and complete provision. Now all we have to do is receive what He is ready to provide.

I have been so touched by all that the Lord has done for us in this Psalm, I find myself singing with enthusiasm and excitement **"I'm a Child of the King":** "My Father is rich in houses and lands, he holdeth the wealth of the world in His hand! Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold, His coffers are full, He has riches untold. A tent or a cottage why should I care? They're building a palace for me over there; Tho' exiled from home, yet, still I may sing: All glory to God, I'm a child of the King. I'm a child of the King, A child of the King: With Jesus my Savior I'm a child of the King."

March 24 — Making Music to Our Maker (Ps. 149:1-3)

Psalm 149:1: *“Praise the Lord. Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints.”*

Psalm 149:2: *“Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the people of Zion be glad in their King.”*

Psalm 149:3: *“Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp.”*

C.H. Spurgeon said: *“We are almost at the last Psalm, and still among the Hallelujahs. This is ‘a new song,’ evidently intended for the new creation, and the men who are of new heart. It is such a song as may be sung at the coming of the Lord, when the new dispensation shall bring overthrow to the wicked and honour to all the saints. The tone is exceedingly jubilant and exultant. All through one hears the beat of the feet of dancing maidens, keeping time to the timbrel and harp.”*

Psalm 145:3: *“Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom”* (NIV).

Verse 1: *“Praise the Lord. Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints.”*

There are 3 things the Psalmist says to us in verse 1: (1) “Praise the Lord”; (2) “Sing to the Lord a new song”; and (3) “his praise [should be present] in the assembly of the saints.”

Psalm 104:35: *“But may sinners vanish from the earth and the wicked be no more. Praise the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord”* (NIV).

Psalm 146:1: *“Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul”* (NIV).

The Psalmist follows up the command to “Praise the Lord” with his second command: *“Sing to the Lord a new song.”*

Psalm 40:3: *“He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord”* (NIV).

Our “new song” will be the song of salvation: grace, Calvary, redemption, and resurrection.

Don Wyrzten’s prayer is: *“Teach me a new song, Lord, and may I learn to express my joy with unrestrained enthusiasm.”*

Someone said: *“Praise is inward delight turned into outward demonstration.”*

Praise is the language of sinners set free.

John MacArthur said: *“I’m convinced that gratitude is the single greatest act of personal worship we can render to God.”* (*Strength For Today*, Sept. 18)

My personal prayer this morning as we worship is: *“Lord, I lift my heart in grateful praise and adoration for You, thanking You so much for the promises of Your coming kingdom. Lord, You truly are King of kings, and Lord of lords. Lord, haste the day when faith shall be sight. Lord, may Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. O Lord, may the day soon come when we shall all be able to say: ‘Our God reigns! Hallelujah!’”*

Verse 2: *“Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the people of Zion be glad in their King.”*

There are 2 things the Psalmist desires here in verse 2: (1) “Let Israel rejoice in their Maker”—focusing on creation; and (2) “let the people of Zion be glad in their King”—referring to the kingdom.

Psalm 95:6-7: *“Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care”* (NIV).

Psalm 145:1: *“I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever”* (NIV).

Israel is challenged to “rejoice in their Maker” and “be glad in their King.”

Praise is merely a performance with obedience.

Verse 3: *“Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp.”*

Here in verse 3 the Psalmist gives us 2 more things that need to be done: (1) “Let them praise his name with dancing” and (2) “Let them...make music...with tambourine and harp.”

Putting them all together: (1) "Let Israel rejoice in their Maker"; (2) "let the people of Zion be glad in their King"; (3) "Let them praise his name with dancing"; and (4) "Let them...make music...with tambourine and harp."

C.H. Spurgeon said: "Let us give the utmost liberty job. Let us never attempt its suppression."

I would like for us to conclude our time of worship and praise today by singing the hymn "**He Keeps Me Singing**": *"There's within my heart a melody, Jesus whispers sweet and low; 'Fear not, I am with thee, peace, be still, In all of life's ebb and flow.' Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Sweetest name I know, Fills my ev'ry longing, Keeps me singing as I go."*

March 25 — I Am Clean (Donna)

We just returned from a mission trip with our young people from church. We were in the inner city of Dallas last week painting, siding, and doing light construction on homes that were not to code and the owners could not afford to get the needed work done.

The first day on the job site, I met Tina, a young woman of about 30 years of age who looked 60. She obviously had a rough life. She was riding her bike by the home we were working on. I asked her if she had a minute to talk and she said, "I don't want to talk with you." I asked her why and she told me, "You will judge me. I have done a lot of bad things." I gently told her that God would not allow me to judge her, that He said in the Bible that we are not to judge each other, because all of us have done bad things." I went on to tell her He loved her so much.

As I shared the gospel message with her using a bracelet with different colored beads on it – I came to the red bead. I began explaining that this bead represents the blood of Jesus shed on the cross. Tina quickly put her hands on her ears and said several times, "I do not want to hear about the blood of Jesus." I let her say this several times and then she quieted down. I gently put two fingers under her chin and raised her face to look in my face and quietly told her, "Tina you need to hear about the blood of Jesus. It is the only thing that that can forgive your bad things." She said you mean Jesus will give me freedom from my sins. I replied, "Yes." "He promises in the Bible."

I explained the meaning of the next white bead. The Bible in the book of Isaiah tells us that God will make our bad things white as snow, if we will ask Him to come into our heart and life and forgive our sins.

Tina prayed to receive Jesus. She prayed out loud the most precious prayer. As long as I live I will never forget her looking up after her prayer, she had the biggest toothless smile on her face and said with a glow on her face, "I am clean."

We talked several times throughout the week. We gave her a cross necklace and a Bible. The last day as we said our good-byes, she told me – I am doing what you said with the green bead – I am growing. I read my Bible last night!! Bless her.

"...and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22).

"What can wash away my sin, nothing but the blood of Jesus."

March 26 — There's a Song in My Heart (Ps. 149:4-5)

Psalm 149:4: *"For the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation."*

Psalm 149:5: *"Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds."*

Verse 4: "For the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation."

Why are we to "sing" and "praise the Lord"? The reason is now given by the Psalmist. There are 2 statements given here: (1) "the Lord takes delight in his people" and (2) "he crowns the humble with salvation."

Psalm 103:1: "Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name" (NIV).

Let's meditate for a moment on these 2 statements here in verse 4.

Statement 1: "The Lord takes delight in his people."

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).

Psalm 16:3: “As for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight” (NIV).

The question I ask myself of the Lord as I face this new day: Am I a joy and delight to my Lord? Statement 2: “he crowns the humble with salvation.”

Psalm 147:6: “The Lord sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground” (NIV).

You’ve got to be humble to give up on your own efforts and by faith receive all that the Lord has provided.

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).

John Ortberg says: “Ironically, often the thing that keeps me from experiencing joy is my preoccupation with *self*. The very selfishness that keeps me from pouring myself out for the joy of others also keeps me from noticing and delighting in the myriad small gifts God offers each day. This is why Walter Percy describes boredom as ‘the self *stuffed with the self*.’” (*The Life You’ve Always Wanted*, 60)

Alan Jackson is one of my favorite cowboy artists. He sings this song that speaks so clearly to the selfish: “I’ve got everything a broken heart needs. I’m doin’ fine don’t you worry ‘bout me, cause I’m lord and master of a fool’s Taj Mahal. Who say’s you can’t have it all!”

Brennan Manning said: “Following Jesus, the humble in heart waste little time in introspection, navel-gazing, looking in the mirror, and being anxious about their spiritual growth.” (*Ruthless Trust*, 125-6)

Verse 5: “Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds.”

There are 2 things mentioned here in verse 5: (1) “the saints rejoice in this honor” and (2) “the saints...sing for joy on their beds.”

Psalm 119:62: “At midnight I rise to give you thanks for your righteous laws” (NIV).

Don Wyrzten says: “My joy in the Lord should be so full that it spills over in spontaneous praise!” We could say, “even upon our beds.”

Acts 2:28: “You have shown me the way of life, and you will fill me with the joy of your presence” (NASB).

As we conclude our meditation, join me in singing verse 3 of **“He Keeps Me Singing”**:
“Feasting on the riches of His grace, Resting ‘neath His cross the way, Though sometimes the path seems rough and steep, See His footprints all the way: Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Sweetest name I know, Fills my ev’ry longing, Keeps me singing as I go.”

March 27 — A Song and a Sword (Ps. 149:6-9)

Psalm 149:6: “*May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands,*”

Psalm 149:7: “*to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples,*”

Psalm 149:8: “*to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron,*”

Psalm 149:9: “*to carry out the sentence written against them. This is the glory of all his saints. Praise the Lord.*”

Verse 6: “May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands,”

Hebrews 13:15: “Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name” (NASB).

The word “May” lets us know that this is a prayer request by the Psalmist. He has told them thus far to: (1) “Praise the Lord”; (2) “praise in the assembly of the saints”; and (3) “praise his name with dancing.” He is now making a prayer request: “May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands.”

Warren Wiersbe says: “[This verse] is a picture of warriors on the battlefield, singing in the midst of the battle. It is easy to sing in the congregation, not quite so easy to sing on our beds and difficult to sing on the battlefield. But if we sing, we’ll glorify the Lord, and we’ll grow.”

Nehemiah 4:18a: “and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked” (NIV).

2 Chronicles 20:22: "As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated" (NIV).

John Ortberg says: "Millions of people in churches these days could be called 'pew potatoes.' They want some of the comfort associated with spirituality, but they don't want the risk and challenge that go along with actually following Jesus. Yet Jesus is still looking for people who will get out of the boat. He is looking for someone who will say, if you'll pardon the expression, 'I may be small potatoes, Lord, but this spud's for you.'" (*If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*, 22)

In spiritual warfare, the Christian soldier has praise on his lips and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, in his hands.

Verse 7: "to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples,"

Verse 8: "to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron,"

In verses 7-9 we have the 5-point plan for war: (1) "inflict vengeance on the nations"; (2) "inflict...punishment on the peoples"; (3) "bind their kings with fetters"; (4) "their nobles with shackles of iron"; and (5) "carry out the sentence written against them."

Ezekiel 21:5: "Then all people will know that I the Lord have drawn my sword from its scabbard; it will not return again" (NIV).

Verse 9: "to carry out the sentence written against them. This is the glory of all his saints. Praise the Lord."

This is a glorious picture of the coming kingdom, when Jesus Christ comes with all the saints to set up His kingdom. His coming triggers the battle of Armageddon.

Don Wyrzten concludes his meditation with this prayer: "*May I have the inner strength not only to praise You, Lord, but to take a stand for righteousness in the circles where I live and work.*"

Please join me in singing verse 4 of the hymn "**He Keeps Me Singing**": "*Soon He's coming back to welcome me Far beyond the starry sky; I shall wing my flight to worlds unknown, I shall reign with Him on high. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Sweetest name I know, Fills my ev'ry longing, Keeps me singing as I go.*"

March 28 — The Hallelujah Chorus (Ps. 150:1)

Psalm 150:1: "Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens."

Mother Teresa said: "Joy is prayer—Joy is strength—Joy is love—Joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls. God loves a cheerful giver. She gives most who gives with joy. The best way to show our gratitude to God and the people is to accept everything with joy. A joyful heart is the inevitable result of a heart burning with love. Never let anything so fill you with sorrow as to make you forget the joy of the Christ risen."

C.S. Lewis said: "I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed."

C.H. Spurgeon said: "*The poet-prophet is full of inspiration and enthusiasm. He stays not to argue, to teach, to explain: but cries with burning words, 'Praise him, Praise him, Praise ye the LORD.'*"

J. Vernon McGee says of Psalm 150: "[It is] The grand finale of the hallelujah chorus, with choir and orchestra."

Verse 1: "Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens."

The key word in verse 1 is the little word "in": "Praise the Lord. Praise God." (1) "in his sanctuary" and (2) "in his mighty heavens."

When we are praising Him "in his sanctuary" it is going to be "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!" When we praise Him "in his mighty heavens" we are exalting Him as the creator of heaven and earth.

"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 power throughout the universe displayed. Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee! How great Thou art!"

Donald Williams asks the question: “Why is it that so many people are hard, cold, loveless, fearful, introverted, sad, scared, empty, angry, violent, cunning, self-centered, self-consumed? The answer, bottom line, is that they have never really worshiped God. They have never bowed to Him, submitted to Him, seen Him in His glory and love, and risen up to praise Him, to make joyful noises and shouts before Him.”

Don Wyrzten says: “This psalm is an orchestra of praise—every instrument imaginable poised and lifted up in worship, celebrating God’s incomparable excellence.”

Wyrzten then prays: “*Dear Lord, may I be bold enough to praise You wherever I am today—at home, in the office, in the midst of recreation, or at church. You inhabit praise, so my joyful heart is Your ‘sanctuary.’*”

Please join me this morning in singing verse 1 of “**In My Heart There Rings a Melody**”: “*I have a song that Jesus gave me, it was sent from heav’n above; There never was a sweeter melody, ‘Tis a melody of love. In my heart there rings a melody, There rings a melody with heaven’s harmony. In my heart there rings a melody; There rings a melody of love.*”

March 29 — Praise For His Power and Greatness (Ps. 150:2)

Psalm 150:2: “Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.”

Verse 2: “Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.”

Our key word in verse 1 was “in.” Our key word in verse 2 is “for.” We “Praise Him”: (1) “for his acts of power” and (2) “for his surpassing greatness.”

The Psalmist is now focusing on: (1) what God does and (2) who God is.

(1) What God does—“his acts of power.” (2) Who God is—“his surpassing greatness.”

In the first phrase “for his acts of power” we see His omnipotence. In the second phrase “for his surpassing greatness” we see His sovereignty.

This being true, we “Praise Him” majestically and marvelously: (1) For what He does and (2) For who He is.

The question I ask myself is: Am I participating in this process of praise by focusing and praising the Lord for what He does and also for who He is?

In this Psalm of 6 verses, we see the word “Praise” 13 times. “Praise the Lord” 3 times, “Praise God” 1 time, and “Praise him” 9 times.

A.W. Tozer said: “God is looking for men in whose hands his glory is safe.” (*Leadership*, Vol. 3, no. 3.)

Charles Swindoll says: “Our all-wise, all-knowing God reigns in realms beyond our comprehension, to bring about a plan that is beyond our ability to hinder, alter, or stop.” (*Perfect Trust*, 76)

Let’s meditate for a few moments on these 2 things: (1) “his acts of power” and (2) “his surpassing greatness.”

Meditating upon His power, or what He does, we praise Him for creation, the plagues in Egypt, the flood, the Red Sea, the manna, the quail, and the water. For the time the sun stood still, for victories granted to His people, for fire from heaven, rain, for parting of the Jordan, for the collapse of the walls of Jericho, for lions restrained from harming Daniel, for protecting Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the furnace. The greatest manifestation of “his acts of power” is still to come as we are encouraged to read biblical prophecy.

When we meditate upon “his surpassing greatness” or who He is, we think of His unconditional love, His forgiveness, grace, mercy, sovereign control, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, omniholiness, wisdom, faithfulness, and provision.

Please join me in singing verse 2 of “**In My Heart There Rings a Melody**.” Sing it as act of worship and praise to our great God: “*I love the Christ who died on Calv’ry, For He washed my sins away; He put within my heart a melody, And I know it’s there to stay. In my heart there rings a melody, There rings a melody with heaven’s harmony. In my heart there rings a melody; There rings a melody of love.*”

March 30 — Bring the Whole Orchestra (Ps. 150:3-5)

Psalm 150:3: *“Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre,”*

Psalm 150:4: *“praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute,”*

Psalm 150:5: *“praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.”*

Verse 3: “Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre,”

Psalm 89:5: “The heavens praise your wonders, O Lord, your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones” (NIV).

Psalm 96:4: “For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods” (NIV).

Our key word in verse 1 was “in.” We are told to “Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary” and “in his mighty heavens.” Our key word in verse 2 was “for.” We are to “Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.” Now here verses 3-5 the key word is “with.” It will occur 6 times in these 3 verses.

There are 9 ways we can “Praise the Lord” in these next verses: (1) “with the sounding of the trumpet”; (2) “with the harp”; (3) “with the...lyre”; (4) “with [the] tambourine”; (5) “with...dancing”; (6) “with the strings”; (7) “with the...flute”; (8) “with the clash of cymbals”; and (9) “with resounding cymbals.”

We could almost say, just pull out all the stops and praise the Lord with everything you’ve got!

Tim Hansel says: “I cannot choose to be strong, but I can choose to be joyful. And when I am willing to do that, strength will follow.”

Billy Sunday said: “If you have no joy in your religion, there’s a leak in your Christianity somewhere.”

Verse 4: “praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute,”

Oswald Chambers said: “Joy is the great note all through the Bible.” C.S. Lewis said: “Joy is the serious business of heaven.”

Verse 5: “praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.”

Oswald Chambers said: “Man cannot find true essential joy anywhere but in his relationship to God.” He also said: “Oh the joy of that life with God and in God and for God!”

Hannah Hurnard said: “Real joy is sorrow accepted and transformed.”

Psalm 68:19: “Praise the Lord; praise God our savior! For each day he carries us in his arms” (NLT).

2 Corinthians 4:15: “For all things are for your sakes, that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God” (NASB).

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).

Join me in singing the third verse of **“In My Heart There Rings a Melody”**: *“’Twill be my endless theme in glory, With the angels I will sing; ’Twill a song with glorious harmony, When the courts of heaven ring. In my heart there rings a melody, There rings a melody with heaven’s harmony. In my heart there rings a melody; There rings a melody of love.”*

March 31 — All Creation Praises the Lord (Ps. 150:6)

Psalm 150:6: *“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.”*

Verse 6: “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.”

We have arrived at the grand finale of praise! Here we have every living creature singing the Hallelujah Chorus.

Isaiah 35:10: “Those who have been ransomed by the LORD will return to Jerusalem, singing songs of everlasting joy. Sorrow and mourning will disappear, and they will be overcome with joy and gladness” (NLT).

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).

Revelation 21:4: “and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away” (NASB).

What a glorious anticipation heaven is for us! No pain, no night, no death, no tears!

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).

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).

I can almost hear heaven singing: “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, All hail Him as thy matchless King through all eternity.”

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown in their old commentary said: “Living voices shall take up the failing sounds of dead instruments, and as they cease on earth, those of intelligent ransomed spirits and holy angels, as with the sound of mighty thunders, will prolong eternally the praise, saying: ‘Alleluia! Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God’; Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.’ Amen!”

Don Wyrzten wrote this song:

*We bow and worship Him, our Lord and King—
Forever and ever His praise we'll sing;
To Him all honor, love, and thanks we bring—
And to His attributes we'll cling.*

*He is deserving of all thanks and praise
With joy overflowing our hearts we raise;
We'll sing and sing of Him for endless days—
This is our sacrifice of praise! (© 1973 by Singspiration Music)*

Wyrzten then prays: “Dear Lord, may I praise You with every breath I take! And may I so inspire others with the music You give me that all creation will join in the chorus!

Bill Bright said: “When we by faith are filled with the Holy Spirit, He guides us, empowers us, makes us holy, bears witness in our lives, comforts us, gives us joy, gives discernment, bears fruit in and through our lives and gives us spiritual gifts for the building up of the Body of Christ.” (*Promises*, 202)

Ron Allen said: “Praise is a matter of life and breath. Won’t you join me in a renewed commitment to a life of praising God? A life lived without the praise of God is not really a life worth living.”

Please join me as we conclude our meditation and worship by singing “**Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee**”: “*Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love; Hearts unfold like flow’rs before Thee, Hail Thee as the sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the dark of doubt away; Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day! All Thy works with joy surround Thee, Earth and heav’n reflect Thy rays, Stars and angels sing around Thee, Center of unbroken praise; Field and forest, vale and mountain, Bloss’ming meadow, flashing sea, Chanting bird and flowing fountain, Call us to rejoice in Thee. Mortals join the mighty chorus Which the morning stars began; Father love is reigning o’er us, Brother love binds man to man. Ever singing, march we onward, Victors in the midst of strife; Joyful music lifts us sunward In the triumph song of life.*”

April 1 — My Friend, Mr. Macho (Mark)

I have a friend named Barry. Barry is the epitome of macho. In the dictionary next to the word macho you’ll find Barry’s picture. We *normal* men may try to prove we are macho by taking needless

risks or talking big, but not Barry. One of the hidden secrets of being truly macho is that you don't feel the need to prove you're macho.

If I were a Marine in combat, I would want Barry in my foxhole. He is the type of guy who would take a bullet for you. Barry is just like that.

Before Barry met Jesus he was the prototype of the original party animal. He partied too much, drank too much, and at times let his machismo get him into trouble. Barry works in oil fields all over the world. In his younger days spent a lot of time in Alaska. He tells of one time being in a bar when three guys started giving him a hard time. Barry asked them: "Do you want it one at a time, or all three at once?" They said, "All three at once!" With that, the conversation moved outside.

At this time in the story Barry points to the "cool" scar above his eye and states: "I never asked that question again of three guys."

One of my favorite stories Barry tells about himself is the time he smashed his thumb while working on an oil rig. The company sent him to a doctor's office. His thumb was black, blue and purple, and the only way to relieve the pressure was to put a hole in the thumbnail with a hot needle! The nurse told Barry he might want to sit down, because with the coming change in body pressure he might feel a little faint. Macho Barry said, "Naah, it won't bother me." Then Barry continues, "The next thing I remember is waking up seeing nothing but white." He had passed out and was face down in the nurse's lap! Barry said he paid his bill and left as soon as possible.

An amazing thing happened to Barry and his wife, Elaine. They met Jesus.

The Bible tells us a well-known truth in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "*Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold, new things have come.*" Barry went from party animal to high school Sunday school teacher. He went from a life of excess to a life that clearly professes the love and peace of God.

One of the greatest expressions of God's power is found in a changed life. The change of a wandering heart, the submission of a rebellious will, and the old creature becoming a new creation demonstrates His power.

Is Barry still macho? Yes, but now he is a Christian who is a macho man with fewer words in his vocabulary.

April 2 — Casting All Your Care on Him (Ps. 4:1)

Psalm 4:1: "Answer me when I call to you, O my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; be merciful to me and hear my prayer."

Whereas Psalm 3 is a morning Psalm, Psalm 4 is an evening Psalm. It's written by David during the time of Absalom's rebellion, probably about 976 B.C. David is 64-years-old and he has 6 years of life left before he dies. The scene of the writing of these Psalms is probably at Mahanaim.

Verse 1: "Answer me when I call to you, O my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; be merciful to me and hear my prayer."

There are 4 concise petitions in this first verse: (1) "Answer"; (2) "Give me"; (3) "be merciful"; and (4) "hear [me]."

Regarding the Hebrew text for the second request "Give me relief," this verb is in the perfect tense and should be translated "you have given me relief; in a narrow place make for me a wide place."

Let's meditate for a moment on these 4 petitions: (1) "Answer me when I call to you."

David is really anxious and deeply concerned about the outcome of this conflict between he and his son and the future of his kingdom.

It sounds much like Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9:19: "O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name" (NIV).

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

(2) "You have given me relief; in a narrow place make for me a wide place."

Just by the very fact that David, in the evening before he retires, gives testimony that he has received relief. I am sure this is the fruit of his spending time in conversation with his Lord.

He's asking the Lord to deal miraculously in the situation with Absalom.

Psalm 18:18-19: "They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the Lord was my support. He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me" (NIV).

(3) "be merciful to me." David asks the Lord to be merciful to him in what is going to be taking place in the time of conflict. God be merciful to me, the sinner. David is fully aware of the fact that it's been 11 long years of estrangement from Absalom that has created these problems. Now as he turns to the Lord in this crisis, he acknowledges his own irresponsible behavior that has created this situation. He asks the Lord to be merciful. He then concludes with:

(4) "hear my prayer."

As we conclude our meditation, let's turn to the invitation by the Lord recorded in 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).

Please join me in worshipping the Lord by singing a couple of verses of "***Under His Wings***": "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, what a refuge in sorrow! How the heart yearningly turns to His rest! Often when earth has no balm for my healing, There I find comfort and there I am blest. Under His wings, under His wings, Who from His love can sever? Under His wings my soul shall abide, Safely abide forever."

April 3 — The Lord is Listening (Ps. 4:2-3)

Psalm 4:2: "How long, O men, will you turn my glory into shame? How long will you love delusions and seek false gods? Selah"

Psalm 4:3: "Know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself; the Lord will hear when I call to him."

Verse 2: "How long, O men, will you turn my glory into shame? How long will you love delusions and seek false gods? Selah"

This second verse is made up of 2 questions, both beginning with the word "How long": (1) "How long, O men, will you turn my glory into shame?" and (2) "How long will you love delusions and seek false gods?"

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: "He asked **how long** they would **turn his glory into shame** with their rebellion and lies ('lies'...is preferable to **false gods**). The intrigue of Absalom, if this was in David's mind here, was partly an attempt to tarnish David's reputation..." (794)

Absalom and his forces are certainly guilty on these 3 counts. They are turning David's "glory into shame" and they "love delusions" of grandeur and power and they are seeking "false gods" or living the lie.

C.H. Spurgeon said: "Hearsay is half lies. A tale never loses in the telling. As a snowball grows by rolling, so does a story. They who talk much lie much."

Spurgeon also says: "I learned his character at once from what he said about others (a mode of judging which has never misled me), and I made up my mind how to act."

Verse 3: "Know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself; the Lord will hear when I call to him."

They need to know 2 things: (1) "the Lord has set apart the godly for himself" and (2) "the Lord will hear when I call to him."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: "In the care of God, David was safe and God would **hear** and respond to his prayers." (794)

Ken Gire says: "Our unanswered questions are the grappling hooks we use to scale the North Face of God, who seems at times an Everest of indifference. The ascent is treacherous. And maybe why we brave the climb is because we sense that abandoning the climb might be even more treacherous. (*The Weathering Grace of God*, 111)

Andrew Murray said: “God will hear me. What a wonderful certainty! We have God’s Word for it.” Murray also said: “Let me bow in stillness before God and wait on Him to reveal Himself as the prayer-hearing God.”

My mother, before she died, left me a lot of personal notes from her devotional collections. This piece certainly fits our meditation this morning.

Child of My Love, fear not the unknown morrow
Dread not the new demand life makes of thee
Thy ignorance doth hold no cause for sorrow
Since what thou knowest not is known to me.

Thou cans’t not see today the hidden meaning
of My command, but thou the light shall gain.
Walk on in faith, upon My promise leaning
And as thou goest, all shall be made plain.

One step thou seest—then go forward boldly
One step is far enough for faith to see.
Take that, and thy next duty shall be told thee
For step by step thy Lord is leading thee. (source unknown)

George Matheson found out that he would soon be blind. This news was too much for his fiancée and she broke their engagement. In his grief and sorrow he wrote that great old hymn *“O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go”*: “O Love that wilt not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee; I give thee back the life I owe, and in Thine ocean depths its flow May richer, fuller be. 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. 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. 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.”

April 4 — Search Your Heart and Be Silent (Ps. 4:4-5)

Psalm 4:4: “In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Selah”

Psalm 4:5: “Offer right sacrifices and trust in the Lord.”

Verse 4: “In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Selah”

Verse 5: “Offer right sacrifices and trust in the Lord.”

You will notice in these 2 verses that there are 5 commands: (1) “In your anger do not sin”; (2) “search your hearts”; (3) “be silent”; (4) “Offer right sacrifices”; and (5) “trust in the Lord.”

As you face these 5 commands this morning in this meditation, ask your conscience if you are doing what is right.

Warren Wiersbe says: “*Meditate* means “to discuss with yourself.” It’s so easy to brood when we’re lying in bed, but God gives quietness when we meditate...”

Psalm 46:10: “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth” (NIV).

Let’s meditate in our concluding moments on these 5 commands:

(1) “In your anger do not sin.”

Ephesians 4:26: “Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger” (NASB).

When matters are brought to us and to our attention, it is easy, from a human perspective, to get angry. That anger is a manifestation of denial or defense, and sometimes even retaliation.

Oswald Chambers said: “There is a potential hero in every man...And a potential skunk.”

(2) “when you are on your beds, search your hearts.”

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; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (KJV).

Jeremiah 17:10: “I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve” (NIV).

The reason this second command follows the first is seen in Ephesians 4:27: “and do not give the devil an opportunity” (NASB).

(3) “be silent.”

Silence is an indication of submissive surrender.

Habakkuk 2:20: “But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him” (NIV).

Romans 3:19: “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God” (NASB).

(4) “Offer right sacrifices.”

In other words, do the right things. Give to the Lord an obedient heart.

The right sacrifice is recorded in Romans 12:1-2: “With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him. Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity” (Phillips).

(5) “trust in the Lord.”

Psalm 37:3: “Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture” (NIV).

Proverbs 3:5-7: “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. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil” (NIV).

“In prayer, we move beyond ourselves to the heart of God....Stillness is shutting of the human voices so that the voice of God may be clearly heard.” (Charles Ringma, *Resist the Powers with Jacques Ellul*, June 25 & July 25)

Isaiah 32:17: “The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever” (NIV).

Has that quiet peace of God invaded your heart? Are you truly trusting Him for whatever circumstances you are facing this day?

Let’s sing verses 1 and 3 of that great old hymn, “*Cleanse Me*”: “Search me, O God, and know my heart today. Try me, O Savior; know my thoughts, I pray. See if there be some wicked way in me; Cleanse me from ev’ry sin, and set me free. Lord, take my life and make it wholly Thine; Fill my poor heart with Thy great love divine. Take all my will, my passion, self, and pride. I now surrender; Lord, in me abide.”

April 5 — A Heart Filled With Joy (Ps. 4:6-7)

Psalm 4:6: “*Many are asking, ‘Who can show us any good?’ Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord.*”

Psalm 4:7: “*You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound.*”

Verse 6: “Many are asking, ‘Who can show us any good?’ Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord.

This is the third question in this Psalm. Back in verse 2 the Psalmist was asking the followers of Absalom: “How long...will you turn my glory into shame? How long will you love delusions and seek false gods?”

Now here he simply states the question of the “Many”: “Who can show us any good?”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: "This verse probably refers to the **many** discontented people following David....David's answer to their question was a prayer for blessing..." (794)

The formal request made by the Psalmist is here in verse 6: "Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord."

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).

Wiersbe said: "Sometimes God's people can be so discouraging! In Psalm 4 we find David listening to people saying, 'Who will show us any good?' (v. 6). David's own men were discouraged. They were going through a trial, and some were saying, 'O David, this is the end. God is no longer going to help us.' That's hard to take. It's rough when your associates or friends say to you, 'Well, you've reached the end. Who will show us any good?'"

David Jeremiah in his book *A Bend in the Road* says:

*Sometimes we come to life's crossroads
And we view what we think is the end.
But God has a much wider vision
And He knows that it's only a bend—
The road will go on and get smoother
And after we've stopped for a rest,
The path that lies hidden beyond us
Is often the path that is best.
So rest and relax and grow stronger,
Let go and let God share your load
And have faith in a brighter tomorrow.
You've just come to a bend in the road. (1)*

Verse 7: "You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound."

Whereas we have the request in verse 6: "Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord," we now have the response here in verse 7. The result of communion is: "You have filled my heart with greater joy."

Jeremiah 31:25: "I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint" (NIV).

Ephesians 5:18: "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit" (NASB).

Bob Hope said: "It is the simplest things, not the great occasions, that in retrospect give off the greatest glow of happiness."

The joy in my heart is greater than "when their grain and new wine abound."

There is "greater joy" than when the market is up. There is "greater joy" than material prosperity.

Proverbs 28:20: "A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished" (NIV).

Lord, help me to maintain a continual contentedness under Your sovereign hand.

We should be thankful that God always turns out to be bigger than we thought!

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).

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: "The **joy** and contentment David experienced in trusting in the **LORD** was **greater** than the mirth of the harvest festivities....True joy and peace depend not on circumstances but on God's protection and provisions" (794).

James Boice said: "Joy floods our hearts when we are conscious of the Lord's favor."

Listen to David Brainerd: February 21, 1746: "My soul was refreshed and comforted, and I could not but bless God, who had enabled me in some good measure to be faithful in the day past. Oh, how sweet it is to be spent and worn out for God!" (John Piper, *The Hidden Smile of God*, 148)

We often hear in the advertising world that "It doesn't get any better than this!" I want to say, however, yes it does! Every day with Jesus is better than the day before. Every day gets better the closer

we get to home and we are spending time in His word. No wonder David could honestly say: “You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound.”

Let’s worship the Lord together by singing **“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 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.”

April 6 — Sleep and Safety (Ps. 4:8)

Psalm 4:8: *“I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.”*

Verse 8: “I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.”

Eugene Peterson paraphrases this verse: “At day’s end I’m ready for sound sleep, For you, GOD, have put my life back together.”

We have spiritual prosperity in verse 7 and peace in verse 8.

The reason for the “sleep in peace” in verse 8 is stated in the final phrase of the Psalm: “for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.”

The emphasis is on the word “alone.”

There is no one and nothing else that can let me: (1) “lie down and sleep in peace” or (2) “make me dwell in safety.”

James Boice said: “It is always that way. If we leave our problems with God, he will shoulder them. And he will enable us to sleep in peace.”

St. Augustine prayed: “...Help me to cease from sin according to Thy will, that I may be capable of doing Thee service according to my duty. Enable me so to guard and govern myself, so to begin and finish my course, that, when the race of life is run, I may sleep in peace, and rest in Thee...” (Mary W. Tileston, *Great Souls at Prayer*, 75)

In James 4:7-10 you have 10 commands that truly allow us to sleep soundly and safely.

(1) “Submit therefore to God.” The dominant thought in the first command is obedience.

(2) Take a firm stand against the devil and “he will flee from you.”

(3) “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” He will come near in response. To “Draw near to God,” however, demands his cleansing.

(4) “Cleanse your hands, you sinners.” Make clean or cleanse and purify.

(5) “and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”

James 1:8 tells us what he means: “being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (NASB).

(6) “Be miserable.”

(7) “Mourn.”

(8) “Weep.”

(9) “let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom.”

(10) “Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.”

Bishop Lancelot Andrewes said: “Excuseless, defenceless, self-condemned am I. My destruction cometh of myself: o Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto me confusion of face.” (34)

Andrewes said further: “Let the power of the Father shepherd me: the wisdom of the Son enlighten me: the operation of the Spirit quicken me.” (103)

Let’s join in a deep act of worship by singing **“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. 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.”

April 7 — The Effective Prayer (Ps. 5:1-2)

Psalm 5:1: “Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my sighing.”

Psalm 5:2: “Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for to you I pray.”

Psalms 3-5 are all written during the time that Absalom has stolen the kingdom from his father. David is about 64-65 years old. He has 5 or 6 years left of his life. He is without the kingdom. He is in Mahanaim.

In Psalm 3 he prayed his morning prayer. In Psalm 4 he prayed his evening prayer. Here in Psalm 5 he continues to express his personal intimacy with God the Father.

In these Psalms we find David is totally abandoned to the Lord. He is broken and he has surrendered to whatever God wants to do with the rest of his life.

Personal intimacy with the Lord certainly is very obvious in these 12 verses in the fact that the Lord is mentioned 31 times.

Verse 1: “Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my sighing.”

In these opening 2 verses he is going to speak of his prayer by “words,” by “sighing,” and by a “cry for help.”

He is going to request of the Lord that He “give ear” and that He “listen.”

Howard Hendricks says: “Jesus says that we ought always to pray and never throw in the towel. The apostle Paul says to pray without interruption and to make prayer our spiritual breathing apparatus. And James says that we have not because we ask not. Yet if your experience matches mine, the one area in your Christian life in which you are constantly shot down in flames is your prayer life.” (DTS, *Veritas*: Vol. 4, No. 1, 1)

Hendricks says further: “Every time you pray, you need to remember you are entering a prayer meeting that is going on 24 hours a day. And what is Jesus praying for? *He is praying for you!* I’m not talking about generally; I’m talking about specifically. If you have no one else to pray for you, Christ is. You can count on it. (4)

Ben Patterson says: “When we pray, we relinquish in a radical way our so-called sovereignty over the purposes of our lives. We subordinate our plans, schedules and life scenarios to the infinitely wiser and more joyful work of God’s hands.” (*Marriage Partnership*, Vol. 4, No. 3.)

(1) “Give ear to my words.” Lord, I am in panic city and I really need audience with You!

(2) “consider my sighing.” Lord, it’s late in life. I feel like a total failure! I have lost my kingdom. I have lost my son. He’s taken the kingdom and now he’s trying to kill me! Lord, I am at a loss for words.

Verse 2: “Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for to you I pray.”

We can now put these 3 petitions together: (1) “Give ear”; (2) “consider”; and (3) “Listen.”

(1) “Give ear to my words”; (2) “consider my sighing”; and (3) “Listen to my cry for help.”

You will notice here in the last phrase he describes whom he is addressing: “my King and my God.” The reason: “for to you I pray.”

“My King and my God” are words of surrender. It’s coming just as I am without one plea! In brokenness and surrender I am asking You to work. He puts his own kingship in perspective.

C.H. Spurgeon said: “‘My King and my God.’ Observe carefully these little pronouns, ‘my King, and my God.’ They are the pith and marrow of the plea. Here is a grand argument why God should answer prayer—because he is *our* King and *our* God.”

Nancy Leigh DeMoss says: “Lynda’s experience poignantly illustrates that as long as we refuse to surrender our will to the will of God, we are never truly free. Rather, we find ourselves dominated by ungodly appetites and forces. When we throw off the restraints of our wise, loving God, we become slaves to terrible taskmasters that are intent on our destruction.” (*Surrender*, 42)

Jack Hayford says: “There is a way to face impossibility—invade it! Not with a glib speech of high hopes, not in anger, not with resignation, not through stoical self-control, but with prayer.” (*Praise in the Presence of God*, 49)

Join me in singing our prayer this morning. **“Open My Eyes That I May See”:** “*Open my eyes that I may see Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me; Place in my hands the wonderful key That shall unclasp and set me free. Silently now I wait for Thee, Ready, my God, Thy will to see; Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine! Open my mind that I may read More of Thy love in word and deed. What shall*

I fear while yet Thou dost lead? Only for light from Thee I plead. Silently now I wait for Thee, Ready, my God, Thy will to see; Open my mind, illumine me, Spirit divine!"

April 8 — Love Gifts on Our Journey (Donna)

My husband and I were on vacation a few months ago. This was one of those vacations where I really needed a vacation. We were headed to some friend's beach home near Padre Island. We got to the beach home, unpacked and headed to the ocean. As we were heading to the beach I was praying that the Lord would refresh us spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally in His love during this time away.

We arrived at our favorite Padre Beach where you can actually drive on the beach. I stepped out of our friend's Jeep, looking forward to feeling the sand with my feet. I stepped on a seashell. I looked down and picked it up. It was a large about three to four inch seashell in the perfect shape of a heart. I was overwhelmed. God was already refreshing me with His love. I was so touched. I shared with my husband and we talked about how long ago God must have made this heart-shaped seashell, how He brought it to Padre Island and then had Mark stop on this exact section of "our beach." Amazing God. I kept the seashell and actually showed it to the youth group and children's church kids when I got back from our vacation and shared with the young people, God's great love for us His children and how He draws near to us when we draw near to Him.

The next week a friend called that was going through a very difficult time. We decided to get together and talk. I felt God prompting me to take the heart seashell and tell the story to her and remind her of God's great love that He had me step on that seashell to remind me and her of His love and that He was with her in the tumult of her present life circumstances. I passed the seashell on to her.

Sometimes God blesses us with reminders of His love, care, or presence in our lives. We must always be cautious with His blessings. They are not always meant only for us. Have you read a meaningful book? Is there someone to whom God may want you to pass it on? Have unexpected finances come your way? Are they for you or for you to pass part or all of them on to someone in need? Found a great deal on something? Would God want you to buy two, one for you and one to share? Sometimes we are just the conduit of God's love gifts.

What would have happened if the young boy with the lunch of five loaves and two fish thought the lunch his mom had given him was only for him? So many would have missed out on the blessing of seeing God's provision and care during their time of need.

"Times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).

April 9 — Failing to Pray Limits Us to Our Own Resources (Ps. 5:3)

Psalm 5:3: *"In the morning, O Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation."*

Verse 3: "In the morning, O Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation."

Isaiah 50:4-5: "The Sovereign Lord has given me his words of wisdom, so that I know how to comfort the weary. Morning by morning he awakens me and opens my understanding to his will. The Sovereign Lord has spoken to me, and I have listened. I have not rebelled or turned away" (NLT).

There are 3 things that the Psalmist says here: (1) "you hear my voice"; (2) "I lay my requests before you"; and (3) "[I] wait in expectation."

The time of day is repeated so that we will get the message that this exercise takes place in the morning.

It is his "voice" and his "requests" that are going to be part and parcel of his morning schedule.

I feel strongly that if you really mean surrender, that it will be "In the morning." That you are consulting with the Authority in your life as to what assignments and responsibilities you will have for that particular day.

Personal intimacy with the Lord comes through prayer but I believe it also is hastened and intensified when we check with Him first thing "in the morning."

Jeremiah 33:3: "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know" (NIV).

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).

C.H. Spurgeon said: "An hour in the morning is worth two in the evening."

Steven Lawson says: "Seeking God in the early part of the day reveals an energetic heart that was aggressively pursuing the Lord."

Morning happens to be in the emphatic position in the text. All this means is that "morning" is the first word in the sentence, pointing out what the Psalmist is trying to emphasize on this occasion.

I think the biggest issue is, if we are not talking to Him "In the morning" we are just playing games about brokenness and surrender. We are basically telling Him there is no need for communication, early at the beginning of the day because we've got everything taken care of. This is not the attitude of brokenness and surrender.

It's kind of like praying: "Lord, I surrender but let me handle it!" or "Lord, I'm not sure You can meet this need and it's small and I will take care of it. I'm sure You will appreciate that."

Warren Wiersbe says: "It's imperative for us to meet God in the morning if we want to have a good day."

Don Wyrzten prays: "*Dear Lord, I praise You and thank You that I am not alone in the universe. Because of the presence of Christ in my life, I can live today with deep peace and joy.*"

Psalm 119:147: "I rise before dawn and cry for help; I have put my hope in your word" (NIV).

Charles Stanley prays: "*Dear Lord, change my focus from my own will to Your divine plan. I commit myself to wait for Your best. Give me strength to resist the enemy and trust you for blessings in my life.*" (On Holy Ground, 142)

Please join me in giving the Lord an invitation by singing "**Fill My Cup, Lord**": "*Like the woman at the well I was seeking For things that could not satisfy; And then I heard my Savior speaking 'Draw from My well what never shall run dry.' There are millions in this world who are craving The pleasure earthly things afford; But none can match the wondrous treasure That I find in Jesus Christ my Lord. So, my brother, if the things this world gave you leave hungers that won't pass away, My blessed Lord will come and save you, If you kneel to Him and humbly pray: 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!*"

April 10 — I Did It My Way! (Ps. 5:4-6)

Psalm 5:4: "*You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell.*"

Psalm 5:5: "*The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong.*"

Psalm 5:6: "*You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the Lord abhors.*"

In verses 4-6 we have God's response to resistance.

Verse 4: "You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell."

Psalm 1:6: "For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish" (NIV).

In verses 4-6 you have the description of those who resist God's plan and purpose for their lives. They are those who are involved in Satan and his kingdom rather than God and His kingdom.

Revelation 21:8: "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (NASB).

Oswald Chambers said: "Beware of refusing to go to the funeral of your own independence."

Verse 5: "The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong."

"The arrogant" are those who are the epitome of selfishness. They are unteachable, unbroken, and the ones in control.

Verse 6: "You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the Lord abhors."

In these 3 verses, verses 4-6, the Psalmist turns to magnifying God's holiness and righteousness. In speaking from a negative point of view he says: (1) "You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil"; (2) "with you the wicked cannot dwell"; (3) "The arrogant cannot stand in your presence"; (4) "you hate all who do wrong"; (5) "You destroy those who tell lies"; and (6) "[You abhor] bloodthirsty and deceitful men."

Just the verbs by themselves help you understand how God responds to a lack of brokenness and surrender. The verbs by themselves can really help us: (1) You do not take "pleasure"; (2) "you...cannot dwell"; (3) "you...cannot stand"; (4) "you hate"; (5) "You destroy"; and (6) "you abhor."

I find myself each morning praying for our grandchildren, that God would place a wall of fire, complete protection all around them and overhead, from Satan and his kingdom. (1) This kingdom is vicious and violent. (2) It is characterized with sex, alcohol, and drugs. (3) The moves and music carry the message. (4) The representation of Satan and his kingdom can be seen in the tattoos and the body piercings. (5) It can also be seen in the clothing and the makeup.

I don't know about you but after reading these verses this morning and what's going to happen, I'm reminded of Hebrews 10:31: "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (NASB).

Let's sing a couple of verses of that great hymn of assurance, **"The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power"**: *"The blood that Jesus shed for me, Way back on Calvary; The blood that gives me strength from day to day, It will never lose its pow'r. It soothes my doubts and calms my fears, And it dries all my tears; The blood that gives me strength from day to day, It will never lose its pow'r. It reaches to the highest mountain, It flows to the lowest valley The blood that gives me strength from day to day—it will never lose it's power."*

April 11 — Bowing Down Before Him (Ps. 5:7-8)

Psalm 5:7: *"But I, by your great mercy, will come into your house; in reverence will I bow down toward your holy temple."*

Psalm 5:8: *"Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness because of my enemies—make straight your way before me."*

Verse 7: "But I, by your great mercy, will come into your house; in reverence will I bow down toward your holy temple."

The word "But" forms the contrast here to what he has been describing in verses 4-6. The Psalmist himself says that in contrast to all of that, he has realized his need so: he is coming by "great mercy," he will come "in reverence," and he will "bow down."

I think it is important for us to see the key words in verse 7: "great mercy," "reverence," and "bow down."

The Psalmist has realized his need in the presence of a Holy God.

Luke 18:9-13: "And He also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: 'Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, "God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get." 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 Lord then responds by saying: "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:14 NASB).

"In reverence will I bow down toward your holy temple." In other words, in brokenness he has offered the sacrifice necessary for this occasion.

What a dramatic contrast between the previous verses and this one that describes the heart of David.

In the previous verses we noticed that they "do wrong" with their hands, they will not change. They "tell lies" with their mouths.

E.V. Hill said: "I don't want to go to hell, because there are no exits. You can't take a weekend in hell to see how you like it. If you fool around and go to hell, you're there forever." (*A Savior Worth Having*, 90)

Ruth Myers describes the dramatic contrast of the Psalmist here in verse 7: "I come to sit at Your feet, to listen with my heart as I read Your Word. I come to pour out my love, to worship and bow down. I kneel before You, my Maker, for You are my God and I am a sheep of Your pasture. How grateful I am that I'm Yours! Splendor and majesty, strength and beauty are in Your sanctuary, and I have the privilege of dwelling there!" (*31 Days of Power*, 30)

Nancy Leigh DeMoss quotes Jonathan Edwards who said:

*I have been before God,
and have given myself,
all that I am and have,
to God; so that I am not,
in any respect, my own. . . .
I have given myself clear away,
and have not retained
any thing as my own. (Surrender, 47)*

Verse 8: "Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness because of my enemies—make straight your way before me."

You can see surrender and brokenness written all over this verse. (1) The Psalmist is requesting that the Lord "Lead" him; and (2) the Lord "make straight [his] way," not my way.

These both give a clear definition of what it is to be surrendered to the Lord: (1) To ask Him to "Lead" and (2) "make straight" his way before the Psalmist.

Lord, today I want You to have Your way, not my way as I face the challenges that are before me.

"Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness." That is, Lead me in integrity and in truth.

Lord, please do this because "of my enemies."

These enemies are obviously Absalom and his forces that have been previously described in verses 4-6.

I pray every morning: "Lord, keep me on tasks, on track, and out of Satan's traps!"

Peter Marshall said: "Lord, when we are wrong, make us willing to change. And when we are right, make us easy to live with." (*Christian Reader*, Vol. 32, no. 4.)

An African proverb says it well: "Lord Jesus, make my heart sit down."

Henry Blackaby said: "He is God, and you are not. Are you willing to follow Jesus anywhere, at any time, under any condition? That is the only way you can follow Him." (*Experiencing God Day-By-Day*, 50)

Please join me this **morning in singing one of Fannie Crosby's great old hymns "Draw Me Nearer"**: "*I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice, And it told Thy love to me; But I long to rise in the arms of faith, And be closer drawn to Thee. O, the pure delight of a single hour That before Thy throne I spend, When I kneel in prayer, and with Thee, my God, I commune as friend with friend! There are depths of love that I cannot know till I cross the narrow sea; There are heights of joy that I may not reach Till I rest in peace with Thee. Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To the cross where Thou hast died; Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To Thy precious, bleeding side.*"

April 12 — The Wicked Will Perish (Ps. 5:9-10)

Psalm 5:9: "*Not a word from their mouth can be trusted; their heart is filled with destruction. Their throat is an open grave; with their tongue they speak deceit.*"

Psalm 5:10: "*Declare them guilty, O God! Let their intrigues be their downfall. Banish them for their many sins, for they have rebelled against you.*"

The ultimate condemnation of the wicked is in view in these 2 verses.

Verse 9: “Not a word from their mouth can be trusted; their heart is filled with destruction. Their throat is an open grave; with their tongue they speak deceit.”

We have the: (1) “mouth”; (2) “heart”; (3) “throat”; and (4) “tongue.”

Eugene Peterson paraphrases verse 9: “Every word they speak is a land mine; their lungs breathe out poison gas. Their throats are gaping graves, their tongues slick as mud slides.”

It is a pretty ugly picture, isn't it? There are 4 statements here: (1) “Not a word from their mouth can be trusted”; (2) “their heart is filled with destruction”; (3) “Their throat is an open grave”; and (4) “with their tongue they speak deceit.”

Verse 10: “Declare them guilty, O God! Let their intrigues be their downfall. Banish them for their many sins, for they have rebelled against you.”

The Psalmist is asking the Lord to do 3 things to them here in verse 10: (1) “Declare them guilty”; (2) “Let their intrigues be their downfall”; and (3) “Banish them for their many sins.”

The reason he asks the Lord to do this to them is given in the final phrase: “for they have rebelled against you.” They are unbroken, arrogant, and “they have rebelled against you.”

The final act of defiance against God is bringing the ultimate destiny of destruction. “They have rebelled against you.”

Oswald Chambers said: “Beware of refusing to go to the funeral of your own independence.”

Ruth Paxson said: “To master my will, he had to melt my heart.”

She also said: “Surrender is a crisis that develops into a process.”

How different life can be when we surrender to Him in brokenness and contrition of heart. Jesus says to the church of Laodicea in Revelation 3:19-20: “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent. 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).

Thomas A. Dorsey was away on a ministry assignment when his wife, in the process of giving birth, she and the child died. After some time Thomas was sitting at the piano and offered this prayer which I think would be very appropriate for us to offer this morning: **“Take My Hand, Precious Lord”:** *“Precious Lord, take my hand, Lead me on, help me stand; I am tired, I am weak, I am worn; Thru the storm, thru the night, Lead me on to the light; Take my hand, Precious Lord, lead me home. When my ways grows drear, Precious Lord, linger near; When my life is almost gone; Hear my cry, hear my call, Hold my hand lest I fall; Take my hand, Precious Lord, lead me home.”*

April 13 — You Bless the Righteous (Ps. 5:11-12)

Psalm 5:11: *“But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.”*

Psalm 5:12: *“For surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield.”*

Verse 11: “But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.”

The word “But” forms the contrast just like it did back in verse 7.

Let us meditate now for a few moments on some of these phrases. “But let all who take refuge”—that is, all who come in brokenness and surrender themselves to you, Lord.

As they do that, may all of those have 2 things that are true of them: (1) May they “be glad” and (2) “let them ever sing for joy.”

He then asks the Lord to “Spread [His] protection over them, that those who love [His] name may rejoice in [Him].”

The 3 key statements of fruit from brokenness and surrender are: (1) “be glad”; (2) “sing for joy”; (3) “rejoice” in the Lord.

C.H. Spurgeon said: “Take care that you exhibit both holiness of character and joyfulness of spirit; for where these two things are in us, and abound, they make us that we be not barren nor unfruitful.”

Charles Stanley offers this prayer: *“O God, I want to respond properly to brokenness. Don’t let me be bitter or angry. Don’t let me try to escape or manipulate situations. surrender my heart and life to You.”* (*On Holy Ground*, 184)

John Eldredge prays: *“Jesus, forgive me for the ways I’ve mishandled my brokenness. You alone make me dwell in safety. Forgive me for all my self-protection and self-redemption, and for all my false comforters. (You’ll want to renounce specific sins you are aware of here.) Cleanse my heart of every sin by your shed blood.”* (*Walking the Dead*, 143)

In verse 12, our final verse of the Psalm, he is now going to give us the reason why he has asked for the things that he has asked for in verse 11.

Verse 12: “For surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield.”

“For surely, O Lord” You do 2 things: (1) “you bless the righteous” and (2) “you surround them [the righteous] with your favor.”

The illustration of this surrounding is “as with a shield.”

Warren Wiersbe says: *“You need never be paralyzed by your difficulties. You have the privilege of praying to a loving, understanding Father, who knows your condition. He guides you through difficulty to victory. When your faith, hope and love are fixed on the Lord, you can face any difficulty or problem, and God will give you joy and peace within.”*

Nancy Leigh DeMoss says:

God says instead, “Here’s a blank piece of paper. I want you to sign your name on the bottom line, hand it back to Me, and let Me fill in the details. Why? Because I am God; because I have bought you; because I am trustworthy; because you know how much I love you; because you live for My glory and not your own independent, self-promoting pleasure.”...If we will let Him, God will fill in the details of our lives with His incomparable wisdom and sovereign plan, written in the indelible ink of His covenant faithfulness and love. (*Surrender*, 60)

Please join me in expressing our worship by singing **“My Jesus, I Love Thee”**: *“My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine; For Thee all the follies of sin I resign; My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou; If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ‘tis now. I love Thee, because thou hast first loved me, and purchased my pardon on Calvary’s tree; I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow; If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ‘tis now.”*

April 14 — You Are Everything to Me (Ps. 16:1-2)

Psalm 16:1: *“Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge.”*

Psalm 16:2: *“I said to the Lord, ‘You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.’”*

The major problem in the church of Jesus Christ today is that we have a large mass of Christians who are trying to be holy with unbroken spirits.

Genuine holiness is the fruit of a growing relationship with the Lord.

As we begin our morning meditations in Psalm 16 for the next several days, let us offer this prayer as we launch into this beautiful Psalm: “Lord, I pray we will be become hungry and thirsty for holiness of life that can only be explained as a fruitage of a relationship with a Holy God.”

Verse 1: “Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge.”

Our Psalm opens with a prayer, a prayer for safety: “Keep me safe, O God.”

Then we have a statement of reason: “for in you I take refuge.”

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).

Matthew 23:37-38: “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. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!” (NASB).

C.H. Spurgeon said: “As chickens run beneath the hen, so do I betake myself to thee. Thou art my great overshadowing Protector, and I have taken refuge beneath thy strength.”

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).

Verse 2: "I said to the Lord, 'You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.'"

Psalm 34:10: "The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing" (NIV).

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).

The humility and brokenness of the Psalmist is quite obvious because of these prayers in these first 2 verses.

The Psalmist is saying: "You are everything that is good in my life. You are #1. You are my treasure, my precious possession!"

2 Peter 1:3: "seeing that His divine power has granted to us EVERYTHING pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence" (NASB, *emphasis mine*).

Colossians 3:2: "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth" (NASB).

The godly man is seen living in the Lord's presence.

Warren Wiersbe says: "You have taken a giant step toward true Christian maturity when you can say to the Lord *and mean it*, 'My goodness is nothing apart from You' (v. 2)."

F. B. Meyer said: "The rendering of R.V. is very beautiful 'I have no good beyond Thee.' Satisfied with God; wanting nothing in wealth or comfort outside Him."

This verse is the foundation for all holy living.

It is turning to the Lord, and no one or anything else, and finding one's total and complete fulfillment and satisfaction in Him.

Union with Christ is the root of holiness. Holiness is the fruit of the relationship. The evidence of a deepening relationship is greater holiness.

Let's turn our hearts toward that great old hymn "**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!*"

April 15 — The Gift of Love (Mark)

Many a man has a love-hate relationship with Valentine's Day. We *love* it when we feel we "did well," but we *hate* it when we feel we "did badly" on Valentine's Day.

Once on the day after Valentine's Day I was in a department store standing in line waiting to pay for a purchase. Ahead of me were a husband and wife and the man's mother. The three of them knew the clerk at the cash register. The wife was an elementary school teacher and told the store clerk, "Yesterday I was the only female teacher at my school who did not receive flowers. It was so bad that even the kids were asking, 'Mrs. Johnson, where are your flowers for Valentine's Day?'"

The poor husband was not saying a word, but hanging his head and kind of shuffling his feet. I am not an expert on body language, but I think that this man would rather have been in the dentist chair than standing in line hearing this story. And I think he had heard it told before, several times!

Just about that time his mother began to speak. I thought I was going to see a good mom, coming to the rescue of her depressed, discouraged, and downtrodden son. But what she said was, "Yeah, he's just like his father!" So much for mom to the rescue! The dejected husband decided that if no one else was going to defend him, he would have to do it himself. He made a rather feeble attempt to justify his action (or could we say lack of action) by saying, "Well, I send flowers throughout the year!" The wife, mom, and clerk all looked at him with a look that communicated, "Big deal, what does that have to do with the topic at hand?"

I would just about be willing to say that the next year Mrs. Johnson had flowers on her desk Valentine's Day.

John 15:17: "This I command you, that you love one another."

To those whom God has placed in your life to express love to, go the extra mile. Send flowers, buy a gift, or make dinner reservations. It's not an expense, it's a loving investment in those God given gifts we call family and friends.

April 16 — In You is All My Delight (Ps. 16:3-4)

Psalm 16:3: *"As for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight."*

Psalm 16:4: *"The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods. I will not pour out their libations of blood or take up their names on my lips."*

Verse 3: "As for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight."

In verse 3 we have "the saints" and in verse 4 we have the sinners.

What David is doing here is telling us, because of the fact that the Lord is everything to him, he outlines his relationship in these 2 groups.

There are 3 things he says about "the saints." "As for the saints": (1) "who are in the land"; (2) "they are the glorious ones"; and (3) "in whom is all my delight."

They are described as "in the land," "glorious ones," and David's "delight."

The greatest need for our culture is to see our holiness demonstrated in a consistent life.

2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit" (NASB).

They are "saints" or holy ones. They are "the glorious ones." They are those "in whom is all my delight."

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).

Where there is holiness, there is humility. Genuine God-produced holiness in the life of an individual will produce these 6 things: (1) purity; (2) unity; (3) humility; (4) Christlikeness; (5) consecration; and (6) love.

When righteousness or holiness is the product of a performance rather than the fruit of a relationship, you have a completely different picture.

Verse 4: "The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods. I will not pour out their libations of blood or take up their names on my lips."

In verse 3 we focused on the "saints" and now in verse 4 on the sinners.

There are 3 things he says in verse 4: (1) "The sorrows of those will increase"; (2) "who run after other gods"; and (3) "I will not pour out their libations of blood or take up their names on my lips."

In summary we can say: (1) "sorrows...will increase"; (2) there are those "who run after other gods"; and (3) I will not participate or condone what's being done.

"The road to hell is easily traveled. It's the arrival and the accommodations that take the toll!" (Lord Foulgrin's Letters by Randy Alcorn, 62)

Dorothy Sayers said: "Hell is the enjoyment of our own forever!"

Let's conclude our worship by singing 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."*

April 17 — Pleasant Places (Ps. 16:5-6)

Psalm 16:5: *"Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure."*

Psalm 16:6: *"The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance."*

Verse 5: "Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure."

There are 3 things that we want to look at in this verse: (1) “my portion”; (2) “my cup” and (3) “my lot.” David is praising the Lord for the great things He has done for him. He is thanking the Lord for His purpose, His plan, and His program.

1. “My portion”: “I cry to you, O Lord; I say, ‘You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living’” (Ps. 142:5 NIV).

Psalm 73:26: “My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever” (NIV).

Verse 5 is the testimony of the blessed man.

2. “My cup”: “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” (Rev. 7:17 NASB).

H.C. Leupold said: “...he is the satisfying draught that refreshes and invigorates the soul.”

George Beverly Shea made famous that great old hymn “I’d Rather Have Jesus”:

I’d rather have Jesus than silver or gold,
I’d rather be His than have riches untold,
I’d rather have Jesus than houses or land,
I’d rather be led by His nail-pierced hand—
Than to be the king of a vast domain
Or be held in sin’s dread sway;
I’d rather have Jesus than anything
This world affords today.

Let’s meditate for a moment on these 3 things in verse 5.

(1) “Lord, you have assigned me my portion.”

Lamentations 3:24: “I say to myself, ‘The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him’” (NIV).

(2) “Lord, you have assigned me...my cup.”

Luke 22:42: “saying, ‘Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done’” (NASB).

We should be singing with Jimmy Dean: “I’m drinking from my saucer because my cup overflowed.”

(3) “You have made my lot secure.”

I am as secure as Your promises! I am as secure as Your faithfulness!

Lord, You really do know what is best for us.

Verse 6: “The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.”

There are now 2 observations that He adds to the previous 3. We have 5 observations in these 2 verses: (1) “Lord, you have assigned me my portion”; (2) “Lord, you have assigned me...my cup”; (3) “you have made my lot secure”; (4) “The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places”; and (5) “surely I have a delightful inheritance.”

“Pleasant places” and “a delightful inheritance” sure are attractive.

We need to ask ourselves the question this morning, what about our attitude toward what the Lord has provided for us?

Do we have the same exciting, positive attitudes that David had in this Psalm?

“The boundary lines have fallen for [us] in pleasant places.” Can we say with the Psalmist: “I have a delightful inheritance”?

I am reminded of what the Lord said to David after his sin with Bathsheba: “...I gave your master’s house to you, and your master’s wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more” (2 Sam. 12:7-8 NIV).

If you have to say this morning that your “boundary lines have...[NOT]...fallen in pleasant places, I would ask you who’s been doing the choosing? Choices are always reflected in the consequences. This verse reflects the divine choice NOT the human choices.

Let's worship the Lord this morning by singing 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."

April 18 — I Have Set the Lord Always Before Me (Ps. 16:7-8)

Psalm 16:7: *"I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me."*

Psalm 16:8: *"I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken."*

What marvelous verses we have to celebrate the beginning of this new day!

Verse 7: *"I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me."*

There are 2 key words here in verse 7 that we need to meditate upon. He: (1) "counsels" and (2) "instructs."

Let's meditate for a moment on this opening phrase: "I will praise the Lord, who counsels me." Our first question is: How does the Lord do this? The answer is found in numerous other references in the Psalms. It is through the Word of God.

Psalm 1:2: "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night" (NIV).

Psalm 119:9, 11: "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (NIV).

Psalm 119:130: "The entrance of your words gives light; it gives understanding unto the simple" (KJV).

Our biggest problem in life is thinking we know what is best and that the Lord will appreciate our help. Therefore, we do not ask for directions.

"I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me."

Psalm 119:133: "Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me" (NIV).

Martin Luther said: "When God purifies the heart by faith, the market is sacred as well as the sanctuary."

It is those night cookies from the Lord's table that refresh our spirit and get us prepared for the new day dawning.

Verse 8: *"I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken."*

"I have set the Lord always before me." I ask myself the question, How do you do this?

Proverbs 3:5-7: "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. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil" (NIV).

Proverbs 8:34: "Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway" (NIV).

"I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken." I have the promise of His presence and His protection.

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).

Because of this, the Psalmist said: "I will not be shaken."

Psalm 119:140: "Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them" (NIV).

My precious Pearl wrote a statement the other day that really got my attention: "I must be utterly ruthless to cast off and cut out anything in my life that is a stench and an offence to the holiness of God."

David Jeremiah said: "But we're stubborn creatures who struggle to learn. And we learn the least when the sun is shining and the winds are crisp and life feels good. Peace and prosperity have never provided effective classrooms. Crisis and catastrophe, on the other hand, offer master's degrees. By the way, that accreditation makes you a Master of Disaster." (*A Bend in the Road*, 120)

Let's worship the Lord this morning by singing our prayer, **"Let the Beauty of Jesus Be Seen in Me"**: *"Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me—All His wonderful passion and purity! O Thou Spirit divine, All my nature refine Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me."*

April 19 — A Glad Heart (Ps. 16:9-10)

Psalm 16:9: *"Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure,"*

Psalm 16:10: *"because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay."*

Verse 9: "Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure,"

There is a 3-fold result from what we read yesterday in verses 7 and 8: (1) "my heart is glad"; (2) "my tongue rejoices"; and (3) "my body...will rest secure."

He not only says "my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices," he also says "my body...will rest secure."

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).

Isaiah 26:3-4: "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal" (NIV).

The blessedness of divine union is rest.

Isaiah 32:17: "The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever" (NIV).

It is because of the attributes of God that these 3 things are true here in verse 9: (1) God is a God who is omnipresent—He is always there for us; (2) God is a God who is omnipotent—He is all the power necessary to accomplish His purposes; and (3) He is omniscient—He knows everything. I have added another: (4) He is omni holy—He is perfectly holy.

It is the supreme desire of His heart that His children take on a family likeness.

Brother Lawrence said: "I know not how God will dispose of me. I am always happy. All the world suffers; and I, who deserve the severest discipline, feel joys so continual and so great that I can scarce contain them." (Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, *The Practice of the Presence of God*)

A.W. Tozer said: "The Christian owes it to the world to be supernaturally joyful."

Jeremiah Burroughs said: "I offer the following description: *Christian contentment is that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, which freely submits to and delights in God's wise and fatherly disposal in every condition.*" (*The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*, 19)

Verse 10: "because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay."

Our tenth verse begins with the word "because," stating the reason why: "my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure."

"Because you": (1) "will not abandon me to the grave" and (2) "nor will you let your Holy One see decay."

I am thinking this morning of 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).

Barbara C. Ryberg has written a beautiful and consoling poem in which she pictures a soul in Glory voicing these words of comfort to the grieving relatives here on earth:

When I am gone, remember I'm with Jesus;
then do not mourn because I've passed away.
Life holds so many griefs and disappointments,
and will you cry because I did not stay?
'Tis only for a spell we must be parted;
not many years on earth to us are given.

And when my Savior tells me you are coming,
 I'll go with Him and welcome you to Heaven.
 Grieve not because the eyes that looked upon you
 shall never see your face on earth again;
 Rejoice, because they look upon the Savior
 who gave His life to ransom sinful men.
 Weep not because I walk no longer with you;
 remember, I am walking streets of gold.
 Weep for yourselves that you awhile must tarry,
 before the blessed Lord you may behold. (*InfoSearch 3.51*)

To conclude our meditation this morning, it seems appropriate that we sing that wonderful hymn
“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. 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 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.”*

April 20 — The Path of Life (Ps. 16:11)

Psalm 16:11: *“You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”*

Verse 11: *“You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”*

There are 3 things in verse 11 that we need to pay attention to this morning: (1) “You have made known to me the path of life”; (2) “you will fill me with joy in your presence”; and (3) “you will fill me...with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

The Psalmist is pointing to the past in the first phrase and to the future in the final 2 phrases.

Let’s meditate together on these 3 phrases for just a few moments.

(1) “You have made known to me the path of life.”

You will remember earlier when we were studying verse 7, we said there were 3 things the Lord has done or is doing for us. Back in verse 7 the key words were “counsels” and “instructs.” Now in verse 11 the key word is “made known.”

Counseling, instructing, and making known—all of these are a vital part of the devotional process. He “counsels,” “instructs,” “makes known” through our times of prayer, meditation, and time in the Word.

This, too, is the process whereby we become more Christlike and begin to reflect His holiness.

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).

Isaiah 26:7: “The path of the righteous is level; O upright One, you make the way of the righteous smooth” (NIV).

This “path of life” is a path of holiness. It is a path that makes “the heart glad,” “the tongue rejoice,” and “the body rest secure.”

The highway of holiness is the “path of life” filed with “joy [and] eternal pleasures.”

(2) “you will fill me with joy in your presence.”

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).

Joy is the evidence when the King is in residence.

Nehemiah said: “...Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength” (8:10 NIV).

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).

The final phrase we will consider in this Psalm is:

(3) “you will fill me...with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

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).

F.B. Meyer says: “The path of life is the upward path *to* life. God is at our right hand, and our lot is pleasant here; and ere long we shall be at his right hand, amid everlasting pleasures” (NASB).

Warren Wiersbe says: “Verse 11 has been my life verse for many years. ‘You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.’ Do you want life and joy? Here’s the secret: Live on God’s path, live in His presence and live for His pleasures.”

Bishop Andrewes said: “Let us all be glad and rejoice and give honour to Him: as for my soul, it shall be satisfied, even as it were with marrow and fatness: therefore let my mouth be filled with thy praise: that I may sing of thy glory and honour all the day long. This is the happiness of the 4 creatures in the Revelation: they rest not day and night saying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty which was and is and is to come.”

Let’s worship and praise the Lord this morning by singing “**Holy Ground.**” Exodus 3:5: “...the place where you are standing is holy ground” (NIV). “*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.*”

April 21 — Prayer for Protection (Ps. 20:1-2)

Psalm 20:1: “*May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.*”

Psalm 20:2: “*May he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion.*”

Psalm 20 is a Psalm of preparation to go to war. In our personal lives and our relationship to the Lord, when you carry your kingdom and an unbroken will into this time of going to war, watch out. Things are going to get hot and there’s going to be some sweating going on.

Victory, however, can be ours in the conflict, no matter what it is, if we are vulnerable, transparent, broken, and teachable.

Psalm 20 is a beautiful prayer on the part of the people as their king prepares to go forth to war.

C.H. Spurgeon said: “*We have before us a National Anthem, fitted to be sung at the outbreak of war, when the monarch was girding on his sword for the fight.*”

Verse 1: “May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.”

You will notice right away that the word “May” occurs 6 times in the first 5 verses. This word is the key to the 6 requests being made by the people on behalf of their king.

The first 2 requests are here in verse 1: (1) “May the Lord answer you when you are in distress” and (2) “may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.”

Don Wyrzten said: “The most formidable weapons of the ancient world were impotent against the Name of the Lord...I too face confrontation—in the big hassles of life and the small hassles of daily living. I don’t want to rely on modern insights or popular solutions....I’m a dependent person. When I am weak, then I am strong. As Sandi Patti sings so gloriously, ‘There is power in the name of the Lord.’”

The first 2 requests in verse 1 are: (1) “May the Lord answer you when you are in distress” and (2) “may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.”

Verse 2: “May he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion.”

We now have our next request: (3) “May he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion.”

The key issues in this request are for “help” and “support” from the Lord.

These are things you don’t ask for if you are still in control.

Psalm 33:20: “We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield” (NIV).

Psalm 46:1: “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble” (NIV).

(3) “May he send you help...and grant you support from Zion.”

Before you can pray like this, you've got to want it.

It seems most appropriate this morning for us to conclude our time of worship and study by singing Frances R. Havergal's great hymn **"Like a River Glorious."** Join me in singing verses 2 and 3: *"Hidden in the hollow Of His blessed hand, Never foe can follow Never traitor stand; Not a surge of worry Not a shade of care, Not a blast of hurry Touch the Spirit there. Ev'ry joy or trial Falleth from above, Traced upon our dial By the Sun of Love. We may trust Him fully All for us to do; They who trust Him wholly Find Him wholly true. Stayed upon Jehovah, Hearts are fully blest; Finding, as He promised, Perfect peace and rest."*

April 22 — Prayer for Victory (Ps. 20:3-4)

Psalm 20:3: *"May he remember all your sacrifices and accept your burnt offerings. Selah"*

Psalm 20:4: *"May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed."*

Verse 3: "May he remember all your sacrifices and accept your burnt offerings. Selah"

The key words in verse 3 are "remember" and "accept."

Request 4 would be: "May he remember all your sacrifices and accept your burnt offerings.

Selah"

The Psalmist is aware that blessing comes from obedience.

Joni Eareckson Tada says: "Like art, like music, like so many other disciplines, prayer can only be appreciated when you actually spend time in it. Spending time with the Master will elevate your thinking. The more you pray, the more will be revealed. You will understand. You will smile and nod your head as you identify with others who fight long battles and find great joy on their knees."

Verse 4: "May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed."

This is request 5 in a series of 6 requests made by the congregation for the king who is preparing to go to war.

Request 5: "May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed."

Proverbs 16:9: "In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps" (NIV).

Proverbs 19:21: "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails" (NIV).

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 14:27: "For the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?" (NIV).

François Fénelon said: "If God bores you, tell him that he bores you; that you prefer the vilest amusements to his presence; that you only feel at your ease when you are far from him."

Let's celebrate the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross by singing a verse of **"Victory in Jesus"**: *"I heard an old, old story, How a Saviour comes from glory, How he gave His life on Calvary To save a wretch like me; I heard about His groaning, Of His precious blood's atoning, Then I repented of my sins and won the victory. O victory in Jesus, My Saviour, forever, He sought me and bought me with His redeeming blood; He loved me ere I knew Him and all my love is due Him, He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood."*

April 23 — May the Lord Grant All Your Requests (Ps. 20:5-6)

Psalm 20:5: *"We will shout for joy when you are victorious and will lift up our banners in the name of our God. May the Lord grant all your requests."*

Psalm 20:6: *"Now I know that the Lord saves his anointed; he answers him from his holy heaven with the saving power of his right hand."*

For our time of study and worship this morning, it would be good if we could sing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and fly the facts of victory!

Verse 5: "We will shout for joy when you are victorious and will lift up our banners in the name of our God. May the Lord grant all your requests."

The final request in the Psalm is here in verse 5.

Request 6: "May the Lord grant all your requests."

Let us just review these 6 requests from the congregation:

- (1) "May the Lord answer you when you are in distress."
- (2) "May the name of the God of Jacob protect you."
- (3) "May he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion."
- (4) "May he remember all your sacrifices and accept your burnt offerings."
- (5) "May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed."
- (6) "May the Lord grant all your requests."

1 Corinthians 15:57: "but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (NASB).

The congregation is saying to David, "when you are victorious" we will do 2 things: (1) "we will shout for joy" and (2) "we...will lift up our banners in the name of our God."

Tom Landry said: "The secret to winning is constant, consistent management."

Bill McCartney, who was the founder of Promise Keepers, said: "We all know we are in a war. Our problem is that we are *at* war!" Coach is right. Knowing there is a war going on is one thing. Signing up and soldiering is quite another. (Stu Weber, *Spirit Warriors*, 182)

It might be good for us to reflect for a moment on the word "all": (1) verse 3—"May he remember all your sacrifices"; (2) verse 4—"Make all your plans succeed"; and (3) verse 5—"May the Lord grant all your requests."

Verse 6: "Now I know that the Lord saves his anointed; he answers him from his holy heaven with the saving power of his right hand."

He knew in his heart that God was going to intervene in this conflict just like He did when David was facing Goliath in the Valley of Elah. The battle is the Lord's!

Craig Barnes said: "Do not think for one minute that your good intentions go unnoticed. You have an adversary named the devil, who holds the power of a roaring lion in your life. When it comes to addiction to sin, you will not defeat a roaring lion simply with a little resolve. You're in way over your head on this one." (*Sacred Thirst*, 131)

Romans 8:37-39: "But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loves us. 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 worship the Lord in song by singing that wonderful hymn "**No One Ever Cared for Me Like Jesus**": *"All my life was full of sin when Jesus found me, All my heart was full of misery and woe; Jesus placed His strong and loving arms around me, And He led me in the way I ought to go. Ev'ry day He comes to me with new assurance, More and more I understand His words of love; But I'll never know just why He came to save me, Till some day I see His blessed face above. No one ever cared for me like Jesus, There's no other friend so kind as He; No one else could take the sin and darkness from me, O how much He cared for me."*

April 24 — We Trust in the Name of the Lord our God (Ps. 20:7-9)

Psalm 20:7: "*Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.*"

Psalm 20:8: "*They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm.*"

Psalm 20:9: "*O Lord, save the king! Answer us when we call!*"

Verse 7: "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God."

The Psalmist is saying that there are those who will trust in their military might, but in contrast: "we [will] trust in the name of the Lord our God."

Warren Wiersbe says: "The big question is, What are you trusting today? Everybody trusts in or believes in something. Some people trust in their money or credit cards. Some trust in their strength or expertise or experience."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: "It is not the religious act that makes the Christian, but participation in the suffering of God in the life of the world. It is living unreservedly in life's duties, problems, successes and failures, experiences, and perplexities. In so doing, we throw ourselves completely into the arms of God."

In Mark 4 the disciples were being tossed to-and-fro in the storm on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus was asleep in the back of the boat. When the Lord does stand up and say those words "Peace be still," the sea became calm and the disciples said "Who is this that even the winds and the waves obey his voice?"

Carolyn Custis James says: "Knowledge of his character would place in their hands a reliable compass when the storm hit and life dissolved into a disorienting blur. Nothing would spare them the confession and anguish of the ordeal that awaited. But they would weather the storm differently if they knew the one who was taking them through it." (*When Life and Beliefs Collide*, 41)

Bill and Gloria Gaither wrote a great song some years ago:

*Jesus, Jesus, Jesus
There's just something about that Name
Master, Savior, Jesus,
like the fragrance after the rain...
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,
let all heaven and earth proclaim
kings and kingdoms will all pass away
but there's something about that Name.*

Verse 8: "They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm."

"They" refers to the enemy. There are 2 things said about them: (1) "They are brought to their knees" and (2) "They...fall."

The "but" forms the contrast. We are the ones who "trust in the name of the Lord our God" from verse 7. "[Trusting] in the name of the Lord our God" there are 2 things true of us: (1) "we rise up" and (2) "we...stand firm."

Verse 9: "O Lord, save the king! Answer us when we call!"

This is the congregation being involved once again in the Psalm as they were in the first 5 verses.

The word "Answer" occurs 3 times: (1) "May the Lord answer you"—verse 1; (2) "he answers him from his holy heaven"—verse 6; and (3) "Answer us when we call!"—verse 9.

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

The "Answer" to this prayer is given in Psalm 21:1-6: "O Lord, the king rejoices in your strength. How great is his joy in the victories you give! You have granted him the desire of his heart and have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah. You welcomed him with rich blessings and placed a crown of pure gold on his head. He asked you for life, and you gave it to him—length of days, for ever and ever. Through the victories you gave, his glory is great; you have bestowed on him splendor and majesty. Surely you have granted him eternal blessings and made him glad with the joy of your presence" (NIV).

Warren Wiersbe says: "Although you cannot avoid battles, you can be ready for them and, with God's help, be victorious. Are you prepared to do battle? If not, trust the Lord to help you."

Don Wyrzten prays: "Lord, keep me from placing my trust in the might of men; remind me that Your Name is the only reliable source of strength."

Join me in singing that wonderful hymn "**Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus**": "Stand up, stand up for Jesus, Ye soldiers of the cross, Lift high His royal banner, It must not suffer loss; From vict'ry unto vict'ry His army shall He lead, Till every foe is vanquished And Christ is Lord indeed. Stand up, stand up for Jesus, The trumpet call obey; Forth to the mighty conflict In this His glorious day. Ye that are men, now serve Him Against unnumbered foes; Let courage rise with danger, And strength to strength oppose. Stand up, stand up for Jesus, Stand in His strength alone; The arm of flesh will fail you Ye dare not trust your own; Put on the gospel armor, Each piece put on with prayer; Where duty calls or danger, Be never wanting there."

April 25 — The Earth is the Lord's (Ps. 24:1-2)

Psalm 24:1: “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;”

Psalm 24:2: “for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.”

Psalm 24 is the Psalm of the King. The key to availing ourselves of all the Father’s resources is to surrender to His kingship.

C.H. Spurgeon said: “There should be some preparation of the heart in coming to the worship of God. Consider who he is in whose name we gather, and surely we cannot rush together without thought. Consider who we profess to worship, and we shall not hurry into his presence as men run to a fire.”

Verse 1: “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;”

We could say He is the Owner by creation in these first 2 verses. We could also say it is all His.

The Psalmist mentions “The earth is the Lord’s” and “everything in it.”

He then says “the world” is the Lord’s and “all who live in it.” We have “the earth...and everything in it” in the first part and “the world” and its inhabitants in the later part.

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).

Don Wyrzten says: “The creative power of God inspires awe. I’m filled with reverent wonder as I contemplate it. To think that He spoke and worlds came into being! In contrast to God, I work with raw materials that He created. My creativity is derived from His. I put the wrapping paper and ribbon on His packages.”

Carolyn Custis James says: “Like the psalmist, we are frustrated by our lack of control over our lives and reluctant to trust a God who does not comply with our desires. In every case, for the psalmist and for us, anger is a symptom not of how wrong God has gotten things but of our need to know him better.” (*When Life and Beliefs Collide*, 65)

Charles Stanley says: “Precious heavenly Father, You are an unchanging God who never leaves me helpless. You are sovereign and at work in every detail of my life. Use each setback and victory to accomplish Your purpose of conforming me to Christ’s image.” (*On Holy Ground*, 152)

Verse 2: “for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.”

The Psalmist now gives the reason for his opening statements. It is 2-fold: (1) “he founded it”—that is, the earth, the world—“upon the seas” and (2) “[he] established it upon the waters.”

C.H. Spurgeon said: “Providence and Creation are the two legal seals upon the title-deeds of the great Owner of all things.”

Ron Allen holds to the position that the Davidic authorship took place as a result of David’s experiences with the Ark. He says: “[God] will not be manipulated. He will not be compromised. He will not be trivialized. These things are true whether the offering party is misinformed, ignorant, well-meaning, or whatever. All suffered when they abused the Ark: errant Israel, pagan Philistines, godly Hebrews.”

Deuteronomy 3:24: “O Sovereign Lord, you have begun to show to your servant your greatness and your strong hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do the deeds and mighty works you do?”

Kay Arthur prays: “Thank You, God, that my attitude is not determined by my circumstances but is based on who and what You are. Hallelujah! Praise to Jehovah! As I rest in Your sovereignty and rejoice in Your promises, I find encouragement, hope, and strength to continue.” (*Search My Heart, O God*, 287)

I think it would be appropriate for us to conclude our meditation this morning by singing that hymn of acknowledgement, **“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. 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. 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."

April 26 — Clean Hands and a Pure Heart (Ps. 24:3-4)

Psalm 24:3: *"Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?"*

Psalm 24:4: *"He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false."*

Verse 3: "Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?"

In verse 3 there are 2 questions: (1) "Who may ascend the hill of the Lord?" and (2) "Who may stand in his holy place?"

Habakkuk 3:19 gives us part of the answer to question 1, "Who may ascend the hill of the Lord?"

Habakkuk 3:19: "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).

I think we understand better the reason for the question, "Who may stand in his holy place?" by looking at a couple of parallel passages.

1 Samuel 6:19-20: "But God struck down some of the men of Beth Shemesh, putting seventy of them to death because they had looked into the ark of the Lord. The people mourned because of the heavy blow the Lord had dealt them, and the men of Beth Shemesh asked, 'Who can stand in the presence of the Lord, this holy God? To whom will the ark go up from here?'" (NIV).

2 Samuel 6:9: "David was afraid of the Lord that day and said, 'How can the ark of the Lord ever come to me?'" (NIV).

Ron Allen says: "In the wrong hands it led to devastation, judgment, terrible illness. In curious hands it led to the stilling judgment of God. Even in well-meaning but improper hands, it led to death. *Who may stand before Yahweh?*"

Allen also says:

The basic issues presented by Psalm 15 come to mind. The type of person who may dwell on the holy hill of the sanctuary of Yahweh is one:

- who has a blameless walk
- who is faithful in his speech
- who is honorable with his neighbor
- who has right values
- who keeps his word no matter what
- who never hurts the weak.

John Ortberg says: "THE FIRST TASK IN spiritual life, the one to which we must return over and over, is simply this: to pay attention to God." (*Love Beyond Reason*, 41)

Verse 4: "He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false."

Whereas the Psalmist raises the questions in verse 3, he now gives the answers in verse 4.

There are 4 answers here in verse 4.

(1) "He who has clean hands." 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).

(2) "He who has... a pure heart." Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (NASB).

(3) "He... who does not lift up his soul to an idol." 1 John 5:21: "Little children, guard yourselves from idols" (NASB).

(4) "He who does not... swear by what is false." John 8:32: "and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (NASB).

Steven Lawson says: "The phrase 'clean hands' speaks of the purity of a person's outward actions. A 'pure heart' refers to an inner soul that is holy and undefiled, set apart to God without moral defilement."

F.B. Meyer says: "The Almighty is also the All-Holy. We are his; but we cannot approach Him unless we observe certain conditions, which He will secure in us by the power of the Holy Spirit, if we are only willing that He should."

Kent Hughes says:

We are to live with a confidence in what God has already done for us and to trust in him to continue his transforming work until we see him face to face.

Finish then Thy new creation,

Pure and spotless let us be;

Let us see Thy great salvation

Perfectly restored in Thee.

Changed from glory into glory,

Till in heav'n we take our place,

Till we cast our crowns before Thee,

Lost in wonder, love, and praise. Charles Wesley, 1747 (*Set Apart*, 21)

Randy Alcorn says: "How sold out are you to the battle for purity? How desperate are you to have victory over sin? How radical are you willing to get for your Lord? How much do you want the joy and peace that can be found only in Him? Purity comes only to those who truly want it." (*The Purity Principle*, 69)

I remember back in the early 60s that Stewart Hamblen had come to know Christ at the Billy Graham crusade in Los Angeles. He wrote that great song "It Is No Secret." There was another song of his that our youth group used to love to sing. It asks the question, Is He satisfied? Please join me in singing these 2 verses as we worship and let His Spirit search our own hearts. **"Is He Satisfied?":** *"Do you ever search your heart as you watch the day depart? Is there something way down deep you try to hide? If this day should be the end and eternity begin, when the book is opened wide, would the Lord be satisfied? (Feeble) is the lamp of fame by which man inscribes his name on the walls of time for other men to see. Though he boasts of wealth and pow'r none can help him that hour when the angels hear his plea; is He satisfied with me? Is He satisfied, is He satisfied? Is He satisfied with me? Have I done my best, have I stood the test? Is He satisfied with me? When my Lord shall come again, when He walks and talks with men, what if ev'ry friend He had were just like me? Would He feel a welcome here or would He go away in tears? Am I all that I should be? Is He satisfied with me?"*

April 27 — Blessing From the Lord (Ps. 24:5-6)

Psalm 24:5: *"He will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God his Savior."*

Psalm 24:6: *"Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O God of Jacob. Selah"*

Verse 5: "He will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God his Savior."

Because this person does the 4 things we looked at in verse 4, he is going to receive 2 gifts: (1) "He will receive blessing from the Lord" and (2) "He will receive...vindication from God his Savior." These are gifts from the Lord just like our salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast" (NASB).

A.W. Tozer said: "The reason why many are still troubled, still seeking, still making little forward progress is because they haven't yet come to the end of themselves. We're still trying to give orders, and interfering with God's work within us."

William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army said: "The greatness of a man's power is in the measure of his surrender."

"He will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God his Savior."

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).

Isaiah 50:4-5: “The Sovereign Lord has given me his words of wisdom, so that I know how to comfort the weary. Morning by morning he wakens me and opens my understanding to his will. The Sovereign Lord has spoken to me, and I have listened. I have not rebelled or turned away” (NLT).

Verse 6: “Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O God of Jacob. Selah”

In verse 6 we have a summary statement of the issue. We see it in 2 things. “such is the generation of those”: (1) “who seek him” and (2) “who seek your face, O God of Jacob. Selah.”

The word “seek” is in the present tense. We could translate it: “who are seeking him” or “who are seeking...your face, O God of Jacob. Selah.”

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).

Bruce Wilkinson says:

To help you remember this portrait of a life God rewards, I’ve used words beginning with S....

1. God will reward you for *seeking* Him...
2. God will reward you for *submitting* [to Him]...
3. God will reward you for *self-denial* in His service...
4. God will reward you for *serving*...
5. God will reward you for *suffering*...
6. God will reward you for *sacrifices*...
7. God will reward you for *sharing*... (*A Life God Rewards*, 38-39)

David Jeremiah says: “Would you like to know a priceless secret? Here it is: God is awesome and He’ll change your life, He’ll change your marriage, He’ll change your family, He’ll change your future for generations to come. That’s what God, through Christ, will do!” (*Sanctuary*, 29)

Jack Hayford says: “Learning to invite the Lord to search our hearts can protect us from many future problems. When we abandon ourselves—our thoughts, motives, ambitions, and plans—to God’s scrutiny, we open ourselves to His leading in every decision of our lives, great or small.” (*Praise in the Presence of God*, 48)

“O God of Jacob,” do within my heart and life whatever is necessary to qualify me for the blessing that You have prepared for me.

Because I am longing for that blessing from the Lord, I find myself singing that wonderful hymn of preparation, **“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. Jesus sought me when a stranger, Wandering from the fold of God; He, to rescue me from danger, Bought me with His precious blood. O to grace how great a debtor Daily I’m constrained to be! Let Thy goodness, like a fetter, Bind my wandering heart to Thee: Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love; Here’s my heart, O take and seal it; Seal it for Thy courts above.”*

April 28 — The King of Glory (Ps. 24:7-8)

Psalm 24:7: “*Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.*”

Psalm 24:8: “*Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.*”

Verse 7: “Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.”

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).

C.H. Spurgeon said: “‘Let the King of Glory come in!’ Oh! let this true saying of the faithful and true witness be your encouragement...”

What a spectacular triumph song! “The King of glory” is coming in!

1 Peter 5:4: “And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory” (NASB).

This truly is the triumph song of the ages.

I take it that the Psalm records 5 different possibilities for the “King of glory” that is being described here: (1) when David brings the Ark to Jerusalem to dwell in the tent; (2) “Palm Sunday when Christ comes riding into Jerusalem on a donkey; (3) His ascension into glory; (4) when we let Christ come into our hearts; and (5) when Christ comes to set up His eternal kingdom.

O Lord, haste the day when faith shall be sight! Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven! Lord, may the shout be heard around the world! Hallelujah! The Lord God, the Almighty reigns! And He shall reign forever and forever!

Verse 8: “Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.”

Verse 8 opens with a question: “Who is this King of glory?” Then the remainder of the verse gives us the answer. The “King of glory” is “The Lord” and He is characterized in 3 ways: (1) “strong”; (2) “mighty”; and (3) “mighty in battle.”

I find myself with such joy and anticipation. I feel somewhat like singing Bill Gaither’s great song “The King is Coming.” I have chosen for us, however, this morning to express our praise and adoration to the Lord by singing “Jesus Shall Reign.”

Psalm 72:8: “He will rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth” (NIV).

Join me in singing verses 1 and 4 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. Let ev’ry creature rise and bring His grateful honors to our King; Angels descend with songs again, And earth repeat the loud ‘Amen!’*”

April 29 — Lift Up Your Heads (Ps. 24:9-10)

Psalm 24:9: “*Lift up your heads, O you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.*”

Psalm 24:10: “*Who is he, this King of glory? The Lord Almighty—he is the King of glory. Selah*”

Verse 9: “Lift up your heads, O you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.”

Verse 9 begins the same way verse 7 began: “Lift up your heads, O you gates.”

Steven Lawson says of these 2 verses: “Again the request for entrance comes from those carrying the ark, now just outside the city gates: **Lift up your heads, O you gates.** For effect, it is repeated, **lift them up, you ancient doors.** All this heralding occurs so **the King of glory may come in.** From within the city walls, the question comes, perhaps spoken by the guard of the city gates, **Who is he, this King of glory?** The answer comes from those carrying and attending the ark, outside the gates, **the Lord Almighty—he is the King of glory.**”

Don Wyrzten says: “As the ancient doors swung open, the spotlight focused on the King of glory riding through the gates. He was a King of towering stature, strong and mighty in battle, the Warrior of Warriors! No doubt the marching band started to sing and play the song of Miriam and Moses: ‘The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name’ (Exodus 15:3). What pageantry and excitement they had in their worship! Not lifeless, boring, predictable rituals. They exalted praise to the King of glory.”

Wyrzten then prays: “Lord, teach me to worship You with genuine fervor and vitality. may I be excited by Your presence rather than embalmed by lifeless liturgy.”

Verse 10: “Who is he, this King of glory? The Lord Almighty—he is the King of glory. Selah”

Verse 10 begins with the question and then concludes with the answer. The question: “Who is he, this King of glory?” The answer: “The Lord Almighty—he is the King of glory.”

“The King of glory” is seen coming 5 different times in scripture: (1) when the ark is brought to the tent by David; (2) on Palm Sunday when our Savior rode into Jerusalem; (3) at the time of the ascension into glory when the victorious King arrived home to glory; (4) when we first let Christ come into our hearts; and (5) when Christ comes to set up His kingdom.

Steven Lawson says:

George Fredrick Handel is regarded as one of the greatest composers in the history of the church. His famous oratorio *Messiah* is the most popular of his works; it has moved countless believers to worship God. This masterpiece was first performed in London on March 23, 1743. On this occasion the king of England, George II, was present. All who attended were deeply moved as they heard this inspiring music and biblical text.

When “The Hallelujah Chorus” was sung, containing the powerful words, “For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth,” something unexpected happened. King George II himself rose to his feet in an act of homage. This prompted the entire audience to do the same. They remained standing throughout the entire chorus, recognizing the greatness of heaven’s one, true King who reigns over all, even over earthly kings. From that time to the present, it has always been customary to stand during “The Hallelujah Chorus.”

My heart is filled with joy and adoration! Please join me in singing that wonderful hymn “**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 Lord of love! Behold His hands and side, Rich wounds, yet visible above, In beauty glorified; All hail, Redeemer, hail! For Thou hast died for me: Thy praise shall never, never fail Throughout eternity.”*

April 30 — The Promise of Vindication (Ps. 26:1)

Psalm 26:1: *“Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have led a blameless life; I have trusted in the Lord without wavering.”*

Abraham Lincoln said: “I do the best I know how, the very best I can; and I mean to keep on doing it to the end. If the end brings me out all right, what is said against me will not amount to anything. If the end brings me out wrong, ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference.”

John McKay, NFL coach said: “I am a big believer in the ‘mirror’ test. By that I mean that you shouldn’t worry about the fans or the press or trying to satisfy the expectations of anyone else. All that matters is whether you [can] look in the mirror and honestly tell the person you see there that you’ve done your best.”

There are 2 things that can help us greatly in endeavoring to be transparent: (1) personal accountability and (2) a spiritually sensitive conscience.

There are 2 possibilities with regard to Psalm 26 and when it was written. (1) During the rebellion on the part of Absalom while David is in Mahanaim, north of Jerusalem about 65 miles. He is there awaiting the outcome of Absalom’s attempt to overthrow his kingdom. (2) During the time of famine because of the Gibeonites. After David came back from exile to resume his responsibility as king, there were 3 years of famine. This experience is during the final years of David’s reign.

There is a close relationship between this psalm and the previous one, Psalm 25. We have the teaching in Psalm 25 and the test in Psalm 26.

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 25:9: “He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way” (NIV).

David is late in the game here. I believe the later you get in life, the more intense you become about being on track and doing things right.

Verse 1: *“Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have led a blameless life; I have trusted in the Lord without wavering.”*

David's first petition is "Vindicate me, O Lord." Since David did not have anything to do with Saul's treatment of the Gibeonites, he is asking to be vindicated. The other possibility is that in the situation with Absalom, he is crying out to God to vindicate him in these circumstances.

Psalms 119:42: "then I will answer the one who taunts me, for I trust in your word" (NIV).

Job 42:7: "After the Lord had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, 'I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has'" (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).

Psalms 25:21: "May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope is in you" (NIV).

The Lord answers this petition when He is talking with David's son Solomon in 1 Kings 9:4: "As for you, if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws" (NIV).

Following the petition "Vindicate me, O Lord" is the reason: "For I have led a blameless life; I have trusted in the Lord without wavering." There are 2 reasons given: (1) "I have led a blameless life" and (2) "I have trusted in the Lord without wavering."

You will notice he says "I have led a blameless life." He does not say "I have led a sinless life."

The second reason he is asking the Lord to vindicate him is seen in the final phrase of verse 1: "I have trusted in the Lord without wavering."

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

The key to not wavering is to stay focused 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).

Warren Wiersbe says: "*People can hurt you with false accusations, but you need not let slanderers defeat you. If you walk with integrity, your character will shield you. Keep yourself pure and avoid compromising situations. When someone slanders you, God's grace, His Word and His truth will protect you.*"

David in essence is saying, "I'm a Glad® Wrap Christian! You can see right through me! I'm certainly not a Reynolds Wrap® that covers everything from view."

Join me in singing that great hymn the 5 missionary martyrs sang in their last devotional period before they were martyred by the Auca in January 1956. Let's sing verses 1, 3 and 4 of "**We Rest On Thee**": "*We rest on Thee, Our Shield and Defender! We go not forth alone against the foe. Strong in Thy strength, safe in Thy keeping tender We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go. Strong in Thy strength, safe in Thy keeping tender We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go! We go in faith, our own great weakness feeling, and needing more each day Thy grace to know; Yet from our hearts a song of triumph pealing; We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go. Yet from our hearts a song of triumph pealing; We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go! We rest on Thee, Our Shield and Our Defender! Thine is the battle, Thine shall be the praise. When passing thro' the gates of pearly splendor, Victors, we rest on Thee thro' endless days. When passing through the gates of pearly splendor, Victors, we rest on Thee thro' endless days.*"

May 1 — Test and Try Me Lord (Ps. 26:2-3)

Psalms 26:2: "Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind;"

Psalms 26:3: "for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth."

Verse 2: "Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind;"

Because it is late in the game for David, he is focusing on the top priority issues. In verse 1: "Vindicate me." In other words, I want the straight story to prevail.

Now in verse 2: "Test me," "try me," and "examine my heart and my mind." The key words in verses 1 and 2 are in verse 1—"Vindicate" and in verse 2—"Test," "try," and "examine."

David is obviously getting ready for his final examination. He is being completely open before God.

Job 23:10: "But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold" (NIV).

Don Wyrzten says: "Lord, may my life be an open book before You!"

David says to the Lord at the end of verse 2: "examine my heart and my mind." It is both of these that are at issue.

Proverbs 4:23: "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life" (NIV).

The Lord Jesus says in Mark 7:21-23: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts and fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man" (NASB).

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).

Verse 3: "for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth."

Whereas, in verse 2 it was the "heart" and "mind." Now we have here in verse 3: "love" and "truth."

Here in verse 3 we have the 2-fold reason for why he asked the Lord to "vindicate," "test," "try," and "examine." The reason being, my testimony is: (1) "your love is ever before me" and (2) "I walk continually in your truth."

The question we raised is: How passionate is our love for Jesus Christ?

David says "for your love is ever before me."

In essence David is saying that he is obedient to God's truth. The word for "walk" is comparable to the Greek word which means walking around or conduct.

Steven Lawson says: "David invited God's close scrutiny of every aspect of his life. Test me, try me, and examine my heart and my mind, he declared to God, believing that such a spiritual inventory would prove him to be blameless. He was confident that such a thorough investigation by God would clear him of his enemies' charges because the Lord's love was always before him, motivating him to walk continually in the truth of God's Word."

Let's conclude our worship this morning by singing that great hymn of affirmation "**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; Once I was lost in sin's degradation, Jesus came down to bring me salvation, Lifted me up from sorrow and shame, 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."*

May 2 — I Do Not Touch Unclean Things (Ps. 26:4-5)

Psalm 26:4: *"I do not sit with deceitful men, nor do I consort with hypocrites;"*

Psalm 26:5: *"I abhor the assembly of evildoers and refuse to sit with the wicked."*

Verse 4: "I do not sit with deceitful men, nor do I consort with hypocrites;"

One of the commentators titled these verses "Behavior Separation."

The words "I do not sit" remind me of David's words in Psalm 1:1: "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers" (NIV).

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).

Mark Twain said: "If you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything."

William Shakespeare said: "No legacy is so rich as honesty."

Verse 5: "I abhor the assembly of evildoers and refuse to sit with the wicked."

Our minds still continue to think of the first Psalm and that first verse about the blessed man's relationship with the ungodly.

In taking his stance of separation, you can see it graphically described in the words: “sit,” “consort,” “abhor,” and “refuse.”

Paul’s words in Romans 13 are so similar: “And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts” (13:11-14 NASB).

Phillip Keller says: “Our culture has become crude and very corrupt. It is blatantly reflected in the sordid songs and beastly ballads our people compose. It is expressed in the atrocious art that gives expression to our perversion. It is clearly seen in the grossness of our television programs, the raw lewdness of our literature, the subversion of our social mores.” (*Strength of Soul*, 39)

Isaiah’s prophecy opens with the Lord speaking to the nation Israel: “Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the Lord has spoken: ‘I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner’s manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand. 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’” (1:2-6 NIV).

I feel like this message this morning causes us to recognize it is now time to take a stand, to make a choice and to give ourselves totally and completely to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I trust you feel the same way and will join me in singing George Beverly Shea’s great song “**I’d Rather Have Jesus**”: *“I’d rather have Jesus than silver or gold; I’d rather be His than have riches untold; I’d rather have Jesus than houses or lands. I’d rather be led by His nail-pierced hand. I’d rather have Jesus than men’s applause; I’d rather be faithful to His dear cause; I’d rather have Jesus than worldwide fame. I’d rather be true to His holy name. He’s fairer than lilies of rarest bloom; He’s sweeter than honey from out the comb; He’s all that my hungering spirit needs. I’d rather have Jesus and let Him lead. Than to be the king of a vast domain And be held in sin’s dread sway. I’d rather have Jesus than anything This world affords today.”*

May 3 — I Have a Clean Heart for Worship (Ps. 26:6-7)

Psalm 26:6: *“I wash my hands in innocence, and go about your altar, O Lord,”*

Psalm 26:7: *“proclaiming aloud your praise and telling of all your wonderful deeds.”*

Verse 6: “I wash my hands in innocence, and go about your altar, O Lord,”

The Psalmist is focusing on the reality of the situation. That is, we must constantly be working at forgiveness and fellowship by addressing issues in our lives if we are going to be able to have the confidence and say the things David has spoken back in verses 1-3.

There are 2 things here in verse 6: (1) Forgiveness—“I wash my hands in innocence” and (2) Fellowship—“I...go about your altar, O Lord.”

Isaiah 1:18: “‘Come now, let us reason together,’ says the Lord. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool’” (NIV).

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

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

Psalm 25:7: “Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you are good, O Lord” (NIV).

Psalm 24:3-4: “Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false” (NIV).

C.S. Lewis said: "When a man is getting better, he understands more and more clearly the evil that is still left in him. When a man is getting worse, he understands his own badness less and less."

Verse 7: "proclaiming aloud your praise and telling of all your wonderful deeds."

Now here in verse 7 we have the Psalmist's testimony and thanksgiving. His testimony: "[He is] proclaiming aloud your praise." His thanksgiving: "[He is] telling of all your wonderful deeds."

He is magnifying the Lord and lifting Him up in praise and adoration by telling the great things He has done for him. It could be translated "the things done wonderfully."

1 Samuel 12:24: "But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you" (NIV).

I would love for us to conclude our worship this morning by singing that hymn of accountability and the awareness we will meet Him face to face. **"Face to Face":** *"Face to face with Christ, my Savior, Face to face, what will it be? When with rapture I behold Him, Jesus Christ who died for me. What rejoicing in His presence, When are banished grief and pain; When the crooked ways are straightened, And the dark things shall be plain. Face to face! O, blissful moment! Face to face, to see and know; Face to face with my Redeemer, Jesus Christ, Who loves me so. Face to face I shall behold Him, Far beyond the starry sky; Face to face in all His glory, I shall see Him by and by!"*

May 4 — I Love Your House (Ps. 26:8)

Psalm 26:8: *"I love the house where you live, O Lord, the place where your glory dwells."*

Verse 8: "I love the house where you live, O Lord, the place where your glory dwells."

Here David is talking about the tabernacle—the place of public worship.

Eugene Peterson's paraphrase is beautiful: "God, I love living with you; your house glows with your glory."

Fénelon said: "Those who know the Lord well cannot resist turning to Him in every available moment." (*The Seeking Heart*, 117)

Don Wyrzten says: "In praising the Lord and expressing love for His house, David clearly identified himself with Yahweh. He proved this by his actions: He offered acknowledgement to His Lord. Like David, I want to continually praise the Lord with my imagination, animation, and with everything I have. Above all, I want to avoid boredom in God's house. With words and music I want to bring excitement about the Lord to His dwelling place."

Wyrzten then prays: "Lord, as I identify with You and with Your house, help me find my own personal identity."

Steven Lawson says: "His greatest delight in worshiping God was proclaiming aloud God's praise in the place where the Lord's glory dwells. God's glory was the revelation of his divine attributes and perfections to these worshipers."

In my mind this morning as I worship, I am humming that great old hymn "The Church's One Foundation": "The Church's one foundation Is Jesus Christ her Lord; She is His new creation, By water and the word; From heav'n He came and sought her to be His holy bride; With His own blood He bought her, And for her life He died. Yet she on earth hath union With God, the Three in One, And mystic sweet communion With those whose rest is won: O happy ones and holy! Lord, give us grace that we, Like them, the meek and lowly, On high may dwell with Thee."

Please join me in a hymn of acknowledgement and a prayer. Let's sing that hymn **"More Love to Thee":** *"More love to Thee, O Christ, More love to Thee! Hear Thou the pray'r I make On bended knee; This is my earnest plea: Once earthly joy I craved, Sought peace and rest; Now Thee alone I seek, Give what is best; This all my pray'r shall be: Then shall my latest breath Whisper Thy praise; This be the parting cry My heart shall raise; This still its pray'r shall be: More love, O Christ, to Thee, More love to Thee, More love to Thee!"*

May 5 — Don't Let Me Die With the Wicked (Ps. 26:9-10)

Psalm 26:9: *"Do not take away my soul along with sinners, my life with bloodthirsty men,"*

Psalm 26:10: *"in whose hands are wicked schemes, whose right hands are full of bribes."*

Verse 9: “Do not take away my soul along with sinners, my life with bloodthirsty men,”

The Psalmist now turns to prayer in these verses before us.

This prayer reminds us of David’s prayer in Psalm 51:10-12: “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me” (NIV).

“Do not take away my soul along with sinners.”

David could have added: “I know I deserve it! But I’m asking for Your mercy and grace.”

Billy Sunday said: “If you live wrong, you can’t die right.”

Don Wyrzten says: “David prayed for deliverance from the fate of sinners and petitioned the Lord to redeem him. He trusted Yahweh to spare him from the fate inevitably coming to the wicked. David’s beautiful prayer unveiled his true character. In it we see his authenticity, integrity, and deep humility. Wholehearted in his commitment, David would continue to walk along the path he had chosen. His life was characterized by loyalty and righteousness.”

Several years ago B.J. Thomas wrote a great song “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 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.”

Verse 10: “in whose hands are wicked schemes, whose right hands are full of bribes.”

This verse reminds me of Proverbs 6:16-19: “There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers” (NIV).

Psalm 9:17: “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God” (KJV).

Jesus says in 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).

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).

Abraham asks the question of the Lord just preceding the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah: “Then Abraham approached him and said: ‘Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked?’” (Gen. 18:23 NIV).

And the Lord responds to that: “...Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen. 18:25 NIV).

The answer is also very clear in 2 Peter 3:9: “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).

I feel like singing that great hymn of promise **“When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder”**: *“When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more, And the morning breaks eternal, bright and fair; When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore, And the roll is called up yonder I’ll be there! On that bright and cloudless morning when the dead in Christ shall rise And the glory of His resurrection share; When His chosen ones shall gather to their home beyond the skies, And the roll is called up yonder I’ll be there! Let us labor for the Master from the dawn till setting sun, Let us talk of all His wondrous love and care; Then when all of life is over and our work on earth is done, And the roll is called up yonder I’ll be there! When the roll is called up yonder, When the roll is called up yonder I’ll be there.”*

May 6 — Lord, I’m Walking in Your Ways (Ps. 26:11-12)

Psalm 26:11: "But I lead a blameless life; redeem me and be merciful to me."

Psalm 26:12: "My feet stand on level ground; in the great assembly I will praise the Lord."

Verse 11: "But I lead a blameless life; redeem me and be merciful to me."

The word "But" forms the contrast for what he has just been describing about the wicked in verses 9 and 10. In contrast: "[He] leads a blameless life." This takes us back to verse 1: "Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have led a blameless life; I have trusted in the Lord without wavering."

The difference is in verse 1 he is talking about the past and in verse 11 he is talking about the present.

"I have led a blameless life" in the past—verse 1. "I lead a blameless life" in the present—verse 11. He asks for 2 things here: (1) that the Lord would "redeem" him" and (2) that the Lord would be "merciful" to him.

Lewis Sperry Chafer said: "Gentlemen, for half my life I have been teaching the grace of God, but I am just beginning to understand it. And gentlemen, it is magnificent. It is magnificent!"

C.H. Spurgeon said: "Our integrity is not absolute nor inherent, it is a work of grace in us, and is marred by human infirmity; we must, therefore, resort to the redeeming blood and the throne of mercy, confessing that though we are saints among men, we must still bow as sinners before God."

Psalm 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" (NIV).

Isaiah 1:18: "'Come now, let us reason together,' says the Lord. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool'" (NIV).

Verse 12: "My feet stand on level ground; in the great assembly I will praise the Lord."

Here in verse 12 David returns to praise in this final verse.

Psalm 143:10: "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground" (NIV).

Psalm 1:1-2: "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night" (NIV).

2 Samuel 22:17-18: "He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters. He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me" (NIV).

2 Samuel 22:20: "He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me" (NIV).

2 Samuel 22:47: "The Lord lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God, the Rock, my Savior!" (NIV).

Warren Wiersbe says: "David says, 'I'm on the level because I have integrity. I have nothing in my heart against the Lord. I am not disobeying Him.'"

Someone said "The best way to rise to the heights is to stay on the level."

In the *Valley of Vision* there is recorded a Puritan prayer: "May I never vex him by my indifference and waywardness, grieve him by my cold welcome, resist him by my hard rebellion." (30)

Can you say with David this morning that you are standing "on level ground"?

Won't you join me in singing a couple of verses of **"'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus"**: "O how sweet to trust in Jesus, Just to trust His cleansing blood; Just in simple faith to plunge me 'Neath the healing, cleansing flood! Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus, Just from sin and self to cleanse; Just from Jesus simply taking Life and rest, and joy and peace. Jesus, Jesus, How I trust Him! How I've proved Him o'er and o'er! Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus! O for grace to trust Him more!"

May 7 — No Fear of God (Ps. 36:1-2)

Psalm 36:1: "An oracle is within my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: There is no fear of God before his eyes."

Psalm 36:2: "For in his own eyes he flatters himself too much to detect or hate his sin."

Verse 1: "An oracle is within my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: There is no fear of God before his eyes."

“An oracle is within my heart.”

Proverbs 4:23: “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life” (NIV).

Jeremiah 17:9: “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” (NIV).

The Lord’s response to this statement is in Jeremiah 17:10: “I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve” (NIV).

Romans 3:18: “There is no fear of God before their eyes” (NASB).

F.B. Meyer said: “When there is ‘no fear of God before the eyes,’ a man is free to ‘flatter himself in his own eyes.’ It is a terrible thing when a man becomes headstrong in wickedness, and abhors not evil.”

Don Wyrzten says: “Apart from God, man is powerless to help himself. He doesn’t even know he needs help. Wallowing in his own corruption, he desperately needs God’s love and righteousness, but he doesn’t know it.”

I have a hunch that David wrote this Psalm before he became king. It was while he was wandering in the wilderness for those years, trying to flee from Saul and his troops. You will remember in 1 Samuel 25 David had this encounter: “A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel. His name was Nabal and his wife’s name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings. While David was in the desert, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep. So he sent ten young men and said to them, ‘Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name. Say to him: “Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours!”’” (25:2-6 NIV).

David then instructs the servant to give them some bread and water to help sustain them because they had been protecting the shepherds and sheep during all of this time preceding.

Nabal turns down this request of David and his men and thus forms a perfect picture of what we are seeing in verse 1.

Verse 2: “For in his own eyes he flatters himself too much to detect or hate his sin.”

The reason for the previous statement “There is no fear of God before his eyes” is now given here in verse 2: “For in his own eyes he flatters.” He is a person who is focused on himself. He is focused on himself, he is living in denial, he minimizes the consequences of sin, and the Psalmist says: “For in his own eyes he flatters himself too much to detect or hate his sin.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “Having no dread of the Lord, a wicked person commits evil continually. He soothes his own conscience (flatters himself) to hide his iniquity, because if he saw it from God’s viewpoint he would hate it.” (821)

Hebrews 10:31: “It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (NASB).

2 Corinthians 4:4: “in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (NASB).

Satan has so blinded the mind of the unbeliever that he is living in a world of delusion. Delusion is a persistent false belief held in the face of strong contradictory evidence. It’s a false or mistaken belief or idea about something.

Stanley Baldwin said: “He spent his whole life in plastering together the true and the false and there from extracting the plausible.”

Billy Graham says: “Arrogance has its own built-in misery. The arrogant person may offend others, but he hurts himself more.”

The answer for the plight of the wicked is seen in the 4 R’s: (1) the wicked must accept reality; (2) the wicked must accept redemption purchased for him on the cross of Calvary; (3) the wicked must come in repentance, brokenness, and surrender, realizing his only home is in Jesus Christ; and (4) he must then receive Christ as his own personal savior from sin.

I feel it would be appropriate this morning for us to sing the words of invitation described by Charlotte Elliott in **“Just As I Am.”** As we sing the words of this hymn, let’s think first of **Reality**, verse 1: “*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!" Redemption, verse 2: "Just as I am, and waiting not, To rid my soul of one dark blot, To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!"

Repentance, verse 3: *"Just as I am, tho' tossed about With many a conflict, many a doubt, Fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!"* **Receiving Him**, verse 5: *"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!"*

May 8 — A Sinful Course (Ps. 36:3-4)

Psalm 36:3: *"The words of his mouth are wicked and deceitful; he has ceased to be wise and to do good."*

Psalm 36:4: *"Even on his bed he plots evil; he commits himself to a sinful course and does not reject what is wrong."*

Verse 3: "The words of his mouth are wicked and deceitful; he has ceased to be wise and to do good."

Now we come to the words that he speaks and they are characterized in 2 ways as being: (1) "wicked" and (2) "deceitful." A change has taken place in his life. "He has ceased" 2 things: (1) "to be wise" and (2) "to do good."

When you read 1 Samuel 25 and the story of Nabal and Abigail and their relationship to David, you can see why the words that characterize Nabal especially are some of the same characteristics that are seen in the opening verses of this Psalm.

The wicked person is totally focused upon himself. I am reminded of the little poem "The Tea Party":

I had a little party

One afternoon at three;

'Twas very small, three guests in all,

Just I, myself, and me.

Myself ate up the sandwiches,

While I drank up the tea,

'Twas also I who ate the pie

And passed the cake to me.

C.S. Lewis said: "One almost hears the incessant whispering, tattling, lying, scolding, flattery, and circulation of rumours."

Verse 4: "Even on his bed he plots evil; he commits himself to a sinful course and does not reject what is wrong."

Even when he is going to bed at night, his mind is involved and he is making decisions. There are 3 things he does: (1) "he plots evil"; (2) he says yes to sin; and (3) "he...does not reject what is wrong."

Hosea 7:15: "I trained them and strengthened them, but they plot evil against me" (NIV).

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).

Someone said: "Sin deceives, then defiles, then deadens."

Of course we can say with this "Satan and his plan for destruction of the sinner."

"What is hurting America today is the high cost of low living." (unknown)

Here in verse 4 we see the wicked man doing 3 things: (1) "he plots evil"; (2) he says yes to sin; and (3) "he...does not reject what is wrong."

If we were summarizing the first 4 verses of this Psalm, we would focus on 10 things that describe the wicked: (1) "There is no fear of God"; (2) he is focused on himself; (3) he does not "detect or hate his sin"; (4) "[his] words...are wicked"; (5) "[his] words...are deceitful"; (6) he is no longer wise; (7) he no longer does good; (8) he plans and "plots evil"; (9) he makes a decision to sin; and (10) conformity rather than conviction is the characteristic of his life.

Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death" (NIV).

Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:13-14 tells us the truth about the way to life: "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many

are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it" (NASB).

As we worship the Lord this morning, let's sing that wonderful hymn of promise **"Room at the Cross for You"**: *"The cross upon which Jesus died Is a shelter in which we can hide; And its grace so free is sufficient for me, And deep is its fountain as wide as the sea. Tho' millions have found Him a friend And have turned from the sins they have sinned, The Savior still waits to open the gates And welcome a sinner before it's too late. There's room at the cross for you, There's room at the cross for you; Tho' millions have come, There's still room for one, Yes, there's room at the cross for you."*

May 9 — Lord, You are the Greatest (Ps. 36:5-6)

Psalm 36:5: *"Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies."*

Psalm 36:6: *"Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep. O Lord, you preserve both man and beast."*

Verse 5: "Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies."

In these next 2 verses—verses 5 and 6—David praises the Lord for 4 things: (1) "love"; (2) "faithfulness"; (3) "righteousness"; and (4) "justice."

Psalm 42:1-3: "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My thirst for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, 'Where is your God?'" (NIV).

Verse 6: "Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep. O Lord, you preserve both man and beast."

David is magnifying 4 wonderful attributes of the Lord: (1) "love"; (2) "faithfulness"; (3) "righteousness"; and (4) "justice." He says in verse 5: The Lord's "love...reaches to the heavens" and (2) His "faithfulness to the skies."

Now in verse 6 he says: (3) "Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains" and (4) "your justice like the great deep."

I wonder if David is being reminded of the flood here when he speaks of God's justice in wiping out mankind with the flood. In the final phrase of verse 6 he says: "O Lord, you preserve both man and beast."

By the very fact the Lord "preserve[d] both man and beast" helps us understand that He both protects and provides for His own.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: "Satan is never the final threat. The greater threat is our own disobedience."

As we worship the Lord this morning, thinking of these great qualities of our Lord, I feel it would appropriate for us to sing that wonderful hymn of worship **"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! Fair are the meadows, Fairer still the woodlands, Robed in the blooming garb of spring: Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer, Who makes thee woeful heart to sing. Fair is the sunshine, Fairer still the moonlight, And all the twinkling, starry host; Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer, Than all the angels heav'n can boast! Beautiful Savior! Lord of the nations! Son of God and Son of Man! Glory and honor, Praise, adoration, Now and forevermore be Thine!"*

May 10 — Your Love is a Treasure (Ps. 36:7-8)

Psalm 36:7: *"How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings."*

Psalm 36:8: *"They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights."*

Verse 7: "How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings."

Speaking of the Lord's "unfailing love" the Psalmist says: Nothing can compare with its worth!

Psalm 147:11: “The Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love” (NIV).

Eugene Peterson paraphrases verse 7: “How exquisite your love, O God! How eager we are to run under your wings.”

Don Wyrzten says: “After describing God’s unsearchable, inexhaustible, and unfathomable love, David becomes more intimate. He tells of the pricelessness of God’s unfailing love and affirms that all men, whatever their station in life, can find security, ‘refuge in the shadow of your wings’... What cause for rejoicing and singing today!”

I haven’t even finished the devotion yet and I’m starting to sing “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.”

Verse 8: “They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights.”

In verse 7 we are under His wings. In verse 8 we are at His table.

Psalm 23:5: “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows” (NIV).

Nancy Spiegelberg confesses: “Lord I crawled across the barrenness to you with my empty cup uncertain in asking any small drop of refreshment. If only I had known you better I’d have come running with a bucket.”

Thomas Á Kempis said: “A pure, honest, and stable spirit is not distracted by a lot of activity. He does everything to honor God and is at rest within himself. He seeks to be free from all selfishness”

Now as we conclude verse 8 I find myself singing “I’m Drinking From My Saucer ‘Cause My Cup is Overflowed.”

Seriously let us come to worship and sing that wonderful hymn **“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 the 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.”*

May 11 — The Fountain of Life (Ps. 36:9-10)

Psalm 36:9: “For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.”

Psalm 36:10: “Continue your love to those who know you, your righteousness to the upright in heart.”

Verse 9: “For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.”

In verse 9 we have a statement of the reason why “they feast on abundance” at the Lord’s house. The reason: “For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.”

In verse 7 we “find refuge in the shadow of your wings.” In verse 8 we are at Your table and by Your river. In verse 9 we are “in your light.”

Those who walk with the Lord have 4 things. They: (1) “find refuge”; (2) “feast”; (3) “drink”; and (4) “see light.”

What joy wells up in our hearts when we find ourselves under His wings, at His table, by His river, and in His light.

Verse 10: “Continue your love to those who know you, your righteousness to the upright in heart.”

David characterizes the godly in 3 ways: (1) “[they] find refuge”; (2) “[they] know you”; and (3) “[they are] upright in heart.”

Don Wyrzten says: “Overwhelmed by the stark contrast between human depravity and divine grace, David was driven to prayer. He pleaded for God’s continued love and righteousness and for protection from arrogant and wicked men. Then he painted a word picture of the final doom of evildoers who lay fallen, thrown down, and unable to rise.”

Romans 8:37-39: “But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 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).

Seeing the word “fountain” in the text reminds me of that wonderful old hymn I would like to suggest as an expression of our worship this morning, **“There Is a Fountain”**: *“There is a fountain filled with blood Drawn from Immanuel’s veins; And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains: Lose all their guilty stains, Lose all their guilty stains; And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains. The dying thief rejoiced to see That fountain in his day; And there may I, though vile as he, Wash all my sins away: Wash all my sins away, Wash all my sins away; And there may I, though vile as he, Wash all my sins away. Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood Shall never lose its pow’r, Till all the ransomed Church of God Be saved, to sin no more: Be saved, to sin no more, Be saved, to sin no more; Till all the ransomed Church of God Be saved, to sin no more.”*

May 12 — The Prayer for Protection (Ps. 36:11-12)

Psalm 36:11: “*May the foot of the proud not come against me, nor the hand of the wicked drive me away.*”

Psalm 36:12: “*See how the evildoers lie fallen—thrown down, not able to rise!*”

Verse 11: “May the foot of the proud not come against me, nor the hand of the wicked drive me away.”

David centers in his prayer upon 2 things: (1) “the foot of the proud” and (2) “the hand of the wicked.”

Verse 11 reminds me of the prayer of Jabez: “And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, ‘Oh, that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!’ And God granted him that which he requested” (1 Chron. 4:10 KJV).

Ephesians 6:16: “in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one” (NASB).

Verse 12: “See how the evildoers lie fallen—thrown down, not able to rise!”

God’s judgments may be denied but not avoided!

Randy Rowland says: “One very literary singer/songwriter portrayed rebellion as a marionette who, hoping to be free, cuts its own strings. We all know that such action doesn’t result in freedom—rather it leaves just a pile on the floor.” (*The Sins We Love*, 15)

Tony Evans says: “When sin is finished, it produces death. Carrying through the Bible’s analogy of birth, we might say that we now have a grandchild on our hands. The grandmother is called lust, which gives birth to a baby called sin. Then this baby called sin brings forth a child of its own called spiritual death. This is the genealogy of evil. Sin has the power of reproduction—and Satan is the father of this whole mess.” (*The Perfect Christian*, 27)

In 2 Kings 19:19 Hezekiah prays: “Now, O Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O Lord, are God” (NIV).

The response to that prayer is in 2 Kings 19:35-36: “That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies! So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there” (NIV).

The certainty of future judgment is seen in Revelation 20:15: “And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (NASB).

John MacArthur says: “Having True Sorrow for Sin...Spiritual humility will be marked by a true sorrow over sin. Modern culture does everything possible to avoid pain, to put off thinking about unpleasant subjects, to maximize comfort, and to feel good about circumstances. That philosophy is the reflection of a proud and a self-centered attitude, not the humble and God-centered attitude...” (*Strength for Today*, March 7)

Lancelot Andrewes in his private devotion says: “Excuseless, defenceless, self-condemned am I. My destruction, cometh of myself: O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto me confusion of face.”

How often I must confess I have prayed for protection for myself and for my family and friends. I have been challenged to turn over the protection project to our blessed Savior and to be faithful in fulfilling the mandate of His purpose for me.

I think it would be appropriate for us, as we worship the Lord, to sing the hymn “**Ten Thousand Angels**”: “*They bound the hands of Jesus in the garden when He prayed; They led Him thro’ the streets in shame. They spat upon the Saviour, so pure and free from sin. They said, ‘Crucify Him; He’s to blame.’ To the howling mob He yielded; He did not for mercy cry. The Cross of shame He took alone. And He cried, ‘It’s finished,’ He gave himself to die; Salvation’s wondrous plan was done.*”

May 13 — Prepare for Immediate Departure (Ps. 39:1-2)

Psalm 39:1: “*I said, ‘I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will put a muzzle on my mouth as long as the wicked are in my presence.’*”

Psalm 39:2: “*But when I was silent and still, not even saying anything good, my anguish increased.*”

Verse 1: “I said, ‘I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will put a muzzle on my mouth as long as the wicked are in my presence.’”

David has come to the conclusion of his race. He has just a brief time of just a brief time left. I take it that David is probably somewhere around 68 or 69 years of age when he writes this Psalm. It is every late in the game. He dies at 70.

1 Chronicles 29:15: “We are here for only a moment, visitors and strangers in the land as our ancestors were before us. Our days on earth are like a shadow, gone so soon without a grace” (NLT).

Lawrence Durrell has said: “I am trying to die correctly but it’s very difficult, you know.”

C.S. Lewis said: “It’s hard to have patience with people who say, ‘There is no death,’ or ‘Death doesn’t matter.’ There is death and whatever matters... You might as well say that birth doesn’t matter.”

Alice Thomas Ellis said: “Death is the last enemy. Once we’ve got past that, I think everything will be all right.”

David writes in 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).

David opens the Psalm by making a 3-fold commitment: (1) “I said, ‘I will watch my ways’; (2) “and keep my tongue from sin”; and (3) “I will put a muzzle on my mouth as long as the wicked are in my presence.”

David is making a resolution to keep silent in a painful situation.

David refers to his conduct—“I will watch my ways”—and his conversation—“and keep my tongue from sin.”

Job 1:22: “In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing” (NIV).

James 3:2: “For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect [or mature] man, able to bridle the whole body as well” (NASB).

James 1:19: “This you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger” (NASB).

David does not want to hurt the Lord’s work here on earth by anything that he does or says.

He doesn’t want anything he does or says to provide fuel for the wicked to gloat over his lack of faith or his lack of restraint.

I find myself praying often: “Lord, help me to get out of here without any further embarrassment to Your cause.”

Isaiah 53:7: “He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth” (NIV).

Verse 2: “But when I was silent and still, not even saying anything good, my anguish increased.” The word “But” tells us David confesses he has a tough time putting his money where his mouth is.

There were some painful consequences to the commitment he had made.

“But when I was” 2 things: (1) “silent” and (2) “still.” He then confesses he went overboard: “not even saying anything good.” He learned it is possible to overreact in situations. He also learned a great principle: “No praise can put you in the pit fast.”

David should have learned a little bit about silence when he went through the experience of the sin with Bathsheba. Psalm 32:3-4: “When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah” (NIV).

David, like Jesus, wants to finish strong.

John 9:4: “We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work” (NASB).

David is trying to get a handle on his legacy. I came up with this definition for legacy: Legacy is what you planned to have happen after your departure. This helps us understand what David is going through in this Psalm.

It seems appropriate to conclude our time of worship this morning by singing **“Shall We Gather at the River?”**: *“Shall we gather at the river, Where bright angel feet have trod; With its crystal tide forever Flowing by the throne of God? Ere we reach the shining river, Lay we ev’ry burden down; Grace our spirits will deliver, And provide a robe and crown. Soon we’ll reach the shining river, Soon our pilgrimage will cease; Soon our happy hearts will quiver With the melody of peace. Yes, we’ll gather at the river, The beautiful, the beautiful river, Gather with the saints at the river That flows by the throne of God.”*

May 14 — The Two-Minute Warning (Ps. 39:3-4)

Psalm 39:3: “My heart grew hot within me, and as I meditated, the fire burned; then I spoke with my tongue:”

Psalm 39:4: “‘Show me, O Lord, my life’s end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life.”

Verse 3: “My heart grew hot within me, and as I meditated, the fire burned; then I spoke with my tongue:”

He confessed in verse 2 that through his commitment to silence: (1) “my anguish increased.” Now he gives 2 further consequences of this commitment to silence: (2) “My heart grew hot within me” and (3) “as I meditated, the fire burned; then I spoke with my tongue.”

When you are playing football you have to constantly watch for the blitz. Here Satan is making an effort to blitz David in His offensive action and plan.

Jeremiah 20:9: “But if I say, ‘I will not mention him or speak any more in his name,’ his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot” (NIV).

While David is participating in this discipline of silence, he has had 3 big things happen: (1) “his anguish increased”; (2) “[his] heart grew hot within [him] as [he] meditated”—it literally burst into flames; and then we have the consequences in the last phrase of the verse (3) “then I spoke with my tongue.”

In essence David is saying: “I blew it! I finally had to speak!”

The only redeeming factor in the whole experience is David did not speak to man on the horizontal but he turned toward the Lord and spoke to Him. At least he filled the ear of God and not the godless.

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).

Don Wyrzten prays: "*Help me, Lord, to watch my ways and to keep my tongue from sin. Help me to bring my gravest concerns to You.*"

Verse 4: "Show me, O Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life."

In the first 3 verses we have been considering the resolution to keep silent in a painful situation. We now turn in this next segment to the prayer of impatience uttered at this time.

We have considered the frustrated resolve of silence, now we consider the humbling brevity of life.

There are 3 things David wants the Lord to show him in verse 4: (1) "my life's end"; (2) "the number of my days"; and (3) "how fleeting is my life."

Lord, what I really want to know is, What have I got left to work with?

Psalm 90:12: "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (NIV).

In these 13 verses, the Psalmist mentions himself 40 times. By the fact he makes so many mentions of himself, you can tell his heart is really hurting.

Psalm 46:10: "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth" (NIV).

Someone has mathematically calculated a schedule that compares the average lifetime with a single day, beginning at 7 a.m. If your age is:

- 15, the time is 10:25 a.m.
- 25, the time is 12:42 p.m.
- 35, the time is 3:00 p.m.
- 45, the time is 5:16 p.m.
- 55, the time is 7:34 p.m.
- 65, the time is 9:55 p.m.
- 70, the time is 11:00 p.m. (InfoSearch 3.21)

David is probably figuring he is at 11:30 or 11:45!

Erwin Lutzer said: "At death we cross from one territory to another, but we'll have no trouble with visas. Our representative is already there, preparing for our arrival. As citizens of heaven, our entrance is incontestable."

Oswald Chambers said: "Death is God's delightful way of giving us life."

William Barclay says: "When I die, I should like to slip out of the room without fuss—for what matters is not what I am leaving, but where I am going."

Max Lucado says: "You have a God who hears you, the power of love behind you, the Holy Spirit within you, and all of heaven ahead of you. If you have the Shepherd, you have grace for every sin, direction for every turn, a candle for every corner, and an anchor for every storm. You have everything you need." (*Traveling Light*, 32)

When we are meditating upon death our own ultimate demise, I love singing that enthusiastic, rambunctious chorus "**I'll Fly Away.**" Let's do that 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. When I die, Hallelujah, bye and bye, I'll fly away. When the shadows of this life have flown, I'll fly away. Like a bird thrown, driven by the storm, I'll fly away. I'll fly away, O Glory, I'll fly away. When I die, Hallelujah, bye and bye, I'll fly away. Just a few more weary days and then, I'll fly away. To a land where joy shall never end, I'll fly away. I'll fly away, O Glory, I'll fly away. When I die, Hallelujah, bye and bye, I'll fly away.*"

May 15 — Our Ground-time Will be Brief (Ps. 39:5-6)

Psalm 39:5: "*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*"

Psalm 39:6: *“Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro: He bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it.”*

Verse 5: “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”

Lord, it’s gone by so fast! My life has been like a puff of smoke!

“Each man’s life is but a breath. Selah”

The word “breath” is the word that is translated “meaningless” in the book of Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes 1:2: “‘Meaningless! Meaningless!’ says the Teacher. ‘Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless’” (NIV).

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).

Louis L’Amour said: “The trail is the thing, not the end of the trail. Travel too fast and you miss all you are travelling for.”

Job 7:7: “Remember, O God, that my life is but a breath; my eyes will never see happiness again” (NIV).

Psalm 144:4: “Man is like a breath; his days are like a fleeting shadow” (NIV).

At the conclusion of verse 5 we have a very well-placed “Selah”: There! What do you think about that!?! This unseemly outburst ought to make you stop and think about the consequences of what has just been said.

Verse 6: *“Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro: He bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it.”*

You get the feeling David, in this unseemly outburst, vented his spleen! There are 3 things he said about men here: (1) “Men is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro”; (2) “He bustles about, but only in vain”; and (3) “he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get 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).

Wyrzten prays: “Lord, help me to become aware of just how fleeting my life really is. Help me to make today really count for You.”

One writer said: “Life is a continual process of getting used to things we never expected.”

I think we ought to celebrate this morning and worship the Lord by singing my mom’s favorite hymn, **“Mansion Over the Hilltop.”** Let’s sing together verses 1 and 3: *“I’m satisfied with just a cottage below, A little silver and a little gold; But in that city where the ransomed will shine, I want a gold one that’s silver lined. Don’t think me poor or deserted or lonely, I’m not discouraged, I’m heaven bound; I’m just a pilgrim in search of a city, I want a mansion, a harp and a crown. I’ve got a mansion just over the hilltop, In the bright land where we’ll never grow old; And some day yonder we will never more wander But walk the streets that are purest gold.”*

May 16 — Studying For My Final (Ps. 39:7-9)

Psalm 39:7: *“But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you.”*

Psalm 39:8: *“Save me from all my transgressions; do not make me the scorn of fools.”*

Psalm 39:9: *“I was silent; I would not open my mouth, for you are the one who has done this.”*

Verse 7: “‘But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you.’”

We have come to the time of transition in this wonderful Psalm at verse 7.

The key question David puts to the Lord is: “But now, [in the present] Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you.” With this question David is accepting reality. He is living with a short fuse and he’s certainly not a suicide bomber!

“But now, Lord, what do I look for?”

When all else fails, and everything is falling apart around you, the best thing you can do is look to the Lord.

“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.”

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).

Warren Wiersbe says: “David asked, ‘And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You’ (v. 7). That’s a good question. What are you waiting for? And how can you be sure that what you’re waiting for is going to come?”

Verse 8: “Save me from all my transgressions; do not make me the scorn of fools.”

You will notice 2 key words in David’s request: (1) “all”—David wants to get a clean slate, he wants everything cared for—and (2) “my”—He does not blame or deny, he owns up to them, his sins and transgressions.”

Brennan Manning says: “As an old black preacher on a red-clay road in Georgia instructed a pilgrim, ‘Be who you is, ‘cause if you ain’t who you is, you is who you ain’t.’” (*Ruthless Trust*, 144)

Verse 9: “I was silent; I would not open my mouth, for you are the one who has done this.”

“I was silent; I would not open my mouth.” He then states the reason why he does not open his mouth with words of question and accusation: “for you are the one who has done this.”

In my silence I saw your sovereignty! David has now become aware of God’s sovereign purpose and all that is happening around him. Words are meaningless when God has spoken.

Kris Lundgaard says: “God has served up a great feast in his Word. But if we sit in front of it and refuse to eat, it’s no wonder that we shrivel up like spiritual raisins. If we’re too lazy to dig into his Word, or if through sin we think so little of his Word that we ignore it, how can we help but die on the vine? But God has provided all the nourishment we need, even to our last days.” (*Through the Looking Glass*, 176)

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).

Let’s celebrate our arrival in heaven by singing that wonderful hymn **“When We All Get to Heaven”**: “Sing the wondrous love of Jesus, Sing His mercy and His grace; In the mansions bright and blessed He’ll prepare for us a place. Let us then be true and faithful, Trusting, serving ev’ry day; Just one glimpse of Him in glory Will the toils of life repay. Onward to the prize before us, Soon His beauty we’ll behold; Soon the pearly gates will open, We shall tread the streets of gold. When we all get to heaven, What a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus, We’ll sing and shout for victory.”

May 17 — The Discipline of Death (Ps. 39:10-11)

Psalms 39:10: “Remove your scourge from me; I am overcome by the blow of your hand.”

Psalms 39:11: “You rebuke and discipline men for their sin; you consume their wealth like a moth—each man is but a breath. Selah”

Verse 10: “Remove your scourge from me; I am overcome by the blow of your hand.”

Eugene Peterson paraphrases verse 10 very briefly: “But I can’t take it much longer.”

David sounds like Job: “What is man that you make so much of him, that you give him so much attention, that you examine him every morning and test him every moment? Will you never look away from me, or let me alone even for an instant? If I have sinned, what have I done to you, O watcher of men? Why have you made me your target? Have I become a burden to you? Why do you not pardon my offenses and forgive my sins? For I will soon lie down in the dust; you will search for me, but I will be no more” (Job 7:17-21 NIV).

Don Wyrzten prays: “Lord, no matter how dark and grave my circumstances become, help me to affirm my faith and trust in You. And I trust You to make music even out of the disharmony of my life.”

Verse 11: “You rebuke and discipline men for their sin; you consume their wealth like a moth—each man is but a breath. Selah”

Dan and Dave Davidson say: “Now I see why life is like a finish line; there comes a time in the end to shine.” (*Now I See Why Life Is Like an Olympic Dream*, 153)

Peterson paraphrases this verse: “When you put us through the fire to purge us from our sin, our dearest idols go up in smoke. Are we also nothing but smoke?”

Through this purifying experience David has gained a new perspective. His priorities will change as a result of it. He sees God’s discipline behind all his suffering because of his transgressions. He has received a dose of reality.

Let’s celebrate heaven this morning by singing **“He the Pearly Gates Will Open”**: *“Love Divine, so great and wondrous, Deep and mighty, pure, sublime! Coming from the heart of Jesus, Just the same thro’ tests of time. In life’s eventide, at twilight, At His door I’ll knock and wait; By the precious love of Jesus I shall enter heaven’s gate. He the pearly gates will open, So that I may enter in; For He purchased my redemption And forgave me all my sin.”*

May 18 — Give Me a Break, Cut Me Some Slack (Ps. 39:12-13)

Psalm 39:12: *“Hear my prayer, O Lord, listen to my cry for help; be not deaf to my weeping. For I dwell with you as an alien, a stranger, as all my fathers were.”*

Psalm 39:13: *“Look away from me, that I may rejoice again before I depart and am no more.”*

Verse 12: *“Hear my prayer, O Lord, listen to my cry for help; be not deaf to my weeping. For I dwell with you as an alien, a stranger, as all my fathers were.”*

In these remaining 2 verses we see a repeated cry for relief on the part of the Psalmist.

These 2 verses contain his final plea.

There are 3 things David says at the beginning of verse 12: (1) “Hear my prayer”; (2) “listen to my cry”; and (3) “be not deaf to my weeping.”

The reason: “For I dwell with you as an alien, a stranger, as all my fathers were.”

Daniel 9:19: “O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name” (NIV).

Wyrzten prays: *“Heavenly Father, I may be a stranger in this world, but I don’t want to be a stranger to You. Don’t let me blend with the voices of the world, but help me to sound a clear note of faith in the midst of doubt and disillusionment.”*

Verse 13: *“Look away from me, that I may rejoice again before I depart and am no more.”*

In verse 10 it was “remove your scourge.” Now here in verse 13 it is “Look away from me.” The reason he asks the Lord to do this is: “I may rejoice again before I depart and am no more.”

The word “rejoice” is to become cheerful.

Job 7:19: “Will you never look away from me, or let me alone even for an instant?” (NIV).

Job 10:20-21: “Are not my few days almost over? Turn away from me so I can have a moment’s joy before I go to the place of no return, to the land of gloom and deep shadow” (NIV).

J.L. Stanley said: “He has achieved success who has lived well, laughed often, and loved much; who has gained the respect of intelligent men and the love of little children; who has filled his niche and accomplished his task; who has left the world better than he found it, whether by an improved poppy, a perfect poem or a rescued soul; who has always looked for the best in others and given the best he had; whose life was an inspiration; whose memory a benediction.” (George Humphresy, *Rainbows*, 107)

It is the Spirit’s desire that we cooperate with the Holy Spirit as He molds and makes us more like Christ.

Ephesians 2:10: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (NASB).

One day Billy and Ruth Graham were driving through a long stretch of road construction. They had numerous slowdowns, detours, and stops along the way. Finally they reached the end of all that difficulty, and smooth pavement stretched out before them. This sign caught Ruth’s attention: “End of construction. Thanks for your patience.” She commented that those words would be a fitting inscription on her tombstone someday.

As a matter of fact, those words fit all of us as believers, because in this life we are “under construction.” When we accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, we begin the lifelong process of spiritual growth. (*Our Daily Bread*, 04/24/2002)

Since our ground-time is going to be brief and it won't be long before we take flight, the number one priority in our lives on a daily basis should be to learn more about Jesus. Let's sing that wonderful hymn "**More About Jesus**": *"More about Jesus would I know, More of His grace to others show; More of His saving fulness see, More of His love who died for me. 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 about Jesus, in His Word, Holding communion with my Lord; Hearing His voice in ev'ry line, Making each faithful saying mine. More, more about Jesus, More, more about Jesus; More of His saving fulness see, More of His love who died for me."*

May 19 — Our Great Protector (Ps. 46:1-3)

Psalm 46:1: *"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."*

Psalm 46:2: *"Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,"*

Psalm 46:3: *"though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Selah"*

Verse 1: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

God is the great protector of His people.

In 2 Kings 19 as Sennacherib comes against Jerusalem, King Hezekiah prays and seeks God's deliverance for him. We read in 2 Kings 19:35-36: "That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies! So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there" (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).

"God is our refuge," therefore He is a place providing protection or shelter; a source of help, relief, or comfort in times of trouble.

He is: (1) "our refuge"—so we have a place to hide; (2) "our...strength"—so we have the help; and (3) "an ever-present help in trouble."

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).

A very present help!

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).

Verse 2: "Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,"

The word "Therefore" points back to verse 1: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." Because He is these things to us: "we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea."

A.W. Tozer said: "How completely satisfying to turn from our limitations to a God who has none." (*The Pursuit of God*)

Verse 3: "though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Selah"

The Psalmist in his descriptions here sounds almost like being an eyewitness to the tribulation period. Revelation 9:6: "And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; and they will long to die and death flees from them" (NASB).

For many years I have carried in my devotional material, a picture of Jesus on the stormy seas with a young man standing at the wheel. Jesus is pointing away. I have inscribed these words underneath that picture: "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.'"

I feel like worshiping and singing that great hymn of the church **“How Firm a Foundation”**: *“When through the deep waters I call thee to go, The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow; For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless, And sanctify to thee my deepest distress. When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply: The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine. The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose, I will not, I will not desert to his foes; That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I’ll never, no, never, no, never forsake!”*

May 20 — The City of God (Ps. 46:4-5)

Psalm 46:4: *“There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.”*

Psalm 46:5: *“God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.”*

Verse 4: “There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.”

Warren Wiersbe says: “God is our Refuge, so we need not fear. But He is also our River, so we need not faint.” He says further: “Our Lord said, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink’ (John 7:37). The rivers of Living Water, the rivers of joy, flow out from His throne. In the Bible, water for washing is a picture of the Word of God. But water for drinking is a picture of the Spirit of God. We may drink from this hidden River. And because we drink at this River, we have the joy, the refreshment and the empowerment of the Lord.”

You will remember the Lord promised the woman at the well “Living Water.”

John 4:13-14: “Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life’ (NASB).

Verse 5: “God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.”

Isaiah 37:36: “Then the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies!” (NIV).

Isaiah 17:14: “In the evening, sudden terror! Before the morning, they are gone! This is the portion of those who loot us, the lot of those who plunder us” (NIV).

I find myself humming the tune and singing the words of Martin Luther’s favorite hymn, “A Mighty Fortress is our God.”

I would like to suggest we sing a couple of verses of that wonderful prayer-hymn **“Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”**: *“Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah, Pilgrim thro’ this barren land; I am weak, but Thou art mighty, Hold me with Thy pow’rful hand; Bread of Heaven, Feed me till I want no more; Bread of Heaven, Feed me till I want no more. Open now the crystal fountain Whence the healing waters flow; Let the fiery, cloudy pillar Lead me all my journey thro’; Strong Deliv’rer, Be Thou still my Strength and Shield; Strong Deliv’rer, Be Thou still my Strength and Shield.”*

May 21 — He Lifts His Voice (Ps. 46:6-7)

Psalm 46:6: *“Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.”*

Psalm 46:7: *“The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah”*

Verse 6: “Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.”

2 Peter 3:7: “But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men” (NASB).

2 Peter 3:10: “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up” (NASB).

I find myself this morning saying “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

This is so descriptive of what will take place when the battle of Armageddon recorded in Revelation 19:11-16: “And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, ‘KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS’” (NASB).

Verse 7: “The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah”

Eugene Peterson paraphrases verse 7: “Jacob-wrestling God fights for us, God of angel armies protects us.”

Catching this vision of God makes us understand how simple a matter it will be for him to cause the holocaust that takes place during the great tribulation period.

Anne Graham Lotz said: “Everything is not falling apart, just falling into place!”

The phrase that has meant the most to me this morning is “he lifts his voice.” When God speaks, oh what power are in those words. In our text when “he lifts his voice, the earth melts.”

Stop and think about it. When He spoke in the beginning: “‘Let there be light’ and there was light... ‘Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water.’... ‘Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let the dry ground appear.’... ‘Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it.’... And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years’” (Gen. 1-14 NIV).

At the baptism of the Lord Jesus, we read in Matthew 3:17: “and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased’” (NASB).

On the Mount of Transfiguration we hear the same voice: “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!” (Matt. 17:5 NASB).

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).

With young Samuel we need to be saying, “Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.”

I remember so many nights around the campfire at Pine Cove we used to sing Larry Norman’s sobering song **“I Wish We’d All Been Ready”**: *“Life was filled with guns and wars and ev’ry one got trampled on the floor. I wish we’d all been ready. Children died, the days grew cold, a piece of bread would buy a bag of gold I wish we’d all been ready. Man and wife asleep in bed, she hears a noise and turns her head, he’s gone. I wish we’d all been ready. Two men coming up a hill, one disappears and one left standing still. I wish we’d all been ready. There’s no time to change your mind, the Son is come and you’ve been left behind. There’s no time to change your mind, How could you have been so blind? The Father spoke, the demons dined, the Son is come and you’ve been left behind. You’ve been left behind.”*

May 22 — No More Wars (Ps. 46:8-9)

Psalm 46:8: *“Come and see the works of the Lord, the desolations he has brought on the earth.”*

Psalm 46:9: *“He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire.”*

Verse 8: “Come and see the works of the Lord, the desolations he has brought on the earth.”

Genesis 6:5-7: “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. So the Lord said, ‘I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them’” (NIV).

Romans 1:28: “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper” (NASB).

Revelation 20:11-15: “And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 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).

Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. says: “...Folly is a stubborn swimming against the stream of the universe...spitting into the wind...coloring outside the lines.” (Charles Colson, *How Now Shall We Live?*, 17)

Verse 9: “He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire.”

War has 3 tenses: (1) past; (2) present; and (3) future.

In the past it was the war against Assyria when God sovereignly intervened to provide an Israeli victory. In the present the battle is going on with Satan and his cohorts.

Ephesians 6:12: “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” (NASB).

In the future war will cease at the battle of Armageddon when Jesus Christ comes back again to set up His kingdom.

I'm sure this is a prophetic picture of what it's going to look like when the Lord returns and the nations of the whole world are defeated at the battle of Armageddon.

It is appropriate as we conclude our worship this morning to sing “**Battle Hymn of the Republic**”: *“Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord; He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored; He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword; His truth is marching on. 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. In the beauty of the lilies, Christ was born across the sea, With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me; As He died to make men holy, let us live to make men free. While God is marching on. Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Our God is marching on.”*

May 23 — Be Still and Know (Ps. 46:10-11)

Psalm 46:10: “*Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.*”

Psalm 46:11: “*The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah*”

Verse 10: “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”

Warren Wiersbe says: “‘Be still’ (v. 10) means ‘take your hands off, relax.’ God knows what He is doing, and His timing is perfect (v. 5). When it is all over, He will be exalted (v. 10), and you will be blessed.”

George Santayana said: “Fanaticism is redoubling your efforts when you have forgotten your aim!”

“Be still.” Take your hands off and let God be God. Submit. Surrender. Give up the struggle. Let's learn the secret of backing off.

Vance Havner said: "Most of us would live by faith if we knew that the rewards would be forthcoming inside of two weeks."

Havner also says: "IT IS IMPORTANT *that* we hear. It is important *what* we hear. It is important *how* we hear what we hear."

Verse 11: "The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah"

As we prepare to sing our hymn of worship, let's meditate on 2 New Testament passages that are appropriate.

Ephesians 6:10-11: "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" (NASB).

2 Timothy 2:3-4: "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier" (NASB).

Let's sing that beautiful hymn "**More About Jesus**": *"More about Jesus would I know, More of His grace to others show; More of His saving fulness see, More of His love who died for me. 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 about Jesus, in His Word, Holding communion with my Lord; Hearing His voice in ev'ry line, Making each faithful saying mine. More, more about Jesus, More, more about Jesus; More of His saving fulness see, More of His love who died for me."*

May 24 — Our God Reigns! (Ps. 47:1-2)

Psalm 47:1: "Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy."

Psalm 47:2: "How awesome is the Lord Most High, the great King over all the earth!"

Psalm 47 is a kingdom Psalm. Every heart has a throne room, an oval office. The question we raise as we meditate this morning is: Who is sitting on the throne of your heart?

Many commentators believe this particular Psalm was written during the time recorded in 2 Chronicles 20 when Jehoshaphat is surrounded by enemies on every side.

2 Chronicles 20:12: "...We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you" (NIV).

The Lord responds by saying in 2 Chronicles 20:17: "...Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you" (NIV).

The key to life is to let the King rule!

King of my life, I crown Thee now! When things start happening thick and fast, we forget who has the controls.

I have a sign I face every morning: "Don, Trust Me, I have everything under control. Jesus."

Psalm 145:3: "Great is the Lord! He is most worthy of praise! His greatness is beyond discovery!" (NLT).

Verse 1: "Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy."

The Psalmist begins with 2 commands: (1) "Clap your hands" and (2) "shout to God with cries of joy."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: "...Such shouts of joy...could only come from willing subjects of this King." (829)

(1) Surrender; (2) Submission; and (3) Sensitivity to the Spirit.

Verse 2: "How awesome is the Lord Most High, the great King over all the earth!"

Here the Psalmist describes the Lord in 2 ways. He is: (1) "awesome" and (2) "great."

The Lord is called: (1) "the Lord Most High" and (2) "the great King over all the earth."

Ecclesiastes 3:11 is on my heart this morning: "He has made everything beautiful in its time..." (NIV).

Let's join our hearts in worship and praise as we sing that wonderful chorus "**In His Time**": *"In His time, in His time; He makes all things beautiful in His time. Lord, please show me ev'ry day As You're teaching me Your way, That You do just what You say In Your time. In Your time, in Your time; You make all things beautiful in Your time. Lord, my life to You I bring; May each song I have to sing Be to You a lovely thing In Your time."*

May 25 — Give Praise to Our God (Ps. 47:3-4)

Psalm 47:3: *“He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet.”*

Psalm 47:4: *“He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved. Selah”*

Verse 3: “He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet.”

The key words in verse 2 were “awesome” and “great.”

The key word in verse 3 is “subdued.”

In Daniel 5 you have a graphic picture of God bringing down the kingdom of Babylon and replacing it with the kingdom of Persia. The hand comes and writes upon the wall “MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN”—you are weighed in the balances and found wanting. The text says in Daniel 6:1: “That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two” (NIV).

Psalm 18:46: “The Lord lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God my Savior!” (NIV).

In 2 Chronicles 20 Jehoshaphat experienced the great victory from the Lord. During Hezekiah’s reign there were 185,000 dead soldiers in the field. Pharaoh’s armies in the Red Sea. You kind of get the idea that when God works, the job gets done.

Verse 4: “He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved. Selah”

The key words were “awesome” and “great” in verse 2, “subdued” in verse 3, and now in verse 4 the key word is “chose.”

“He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved.”

Matthew Henry said: “...God shall choose my inheritance for me. He knows what is good for me better than I do for myself...”

1 Peter 1:4: “to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (NASB).

Let’s conclude our worship this morning by singing **“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!”*

May 26 — Hallelujah, Let Us Rejoice! (Ps. 47:5-6)

Psalm 47:5: *“God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets.”*

Psalm 47:6: *“Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises.”*

Verse 5: “God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets.”

The key words were “awesome and great” in verse 2, “subdued” in verse 3, “chose” in verse 4, and now our key word in verse 5 is “ascended.”

This ascension took place amid 2 things: (1) “shouts of joy” and (2) “the sounding of trumpets.”

Don Wyrzten says: “This is a royal procession. As God ascends, accompanied by trumpet fanfares, the people form a great choir of highly involved worshipers, all praising the Lord in song and with music instruments.”

Verse 6: “Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises.”

There are 2 invitations in this verse: (1) “Sing praises to God” and (2) “sing praises to our King.”

There are actually 4 commands in verse 6: (1) “Sing praises to God”; (2) “sing praises”; (3) “sing praises to our King”; and (4) “sing praises.”

Psalm 9:1-2: “I will thank you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell you of all the marvelous things you have done. I will be filled with joy because of you. I will sing praises to your name, O Most high” (NLT).

Psalm 145:3: “Great is the Lord! He is most worthy of praise! His greatness is beyond discovery!” (NLT).

J.I. Packer says: “The world dwarfs us but God dwarfs the world.”

Wyrzten prays: “Dear Lord, I long to praise You with vigor and unrestrained passion. Unfetter my personality, enhance my sensitivity, and enlarge my creativity so that I can be profoundly involved in lifting You high!”

Let’s conclude our praise and worship this morning by singing that praise chorus **“Alleluia”**: *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! He’s my Savior, He’s my Savior, He’s my Savior, He’s my Savior, He’s my Savior, He’s my Savior. He is worthy, He is worthy, He is worthy, He is worthy, He is worthy, He is worthy, He is worthy, He is worthy. I will praise Him, I will praise Him, I will praise Him, I will praise Him, I will praise Him, I will praise Him, I will praise Him, I will praise Him. I will serve Him, I will serve Him, I will serve Him, I will serve Him, I will serve Him, I will serve Him, I will serve Him, I will serve Him.*”

May 27 — The King of All the Earth (Ps. 47:7-9)

Psalm 47:7: “For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise.”

Psalm 47:8: “God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne.”

Psalm 47:9: “The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted.”

Verse 7: “For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise.”

Here in verse 7 we have the reason for the 4-fold invitation to “sing praises” from verse 6: “God is the King of all the earth.”

This takes us back to verse 2: “How awesome is the Lord Most High, the great King over all the earth!”

We have the fifth invitation here in verse 7: “sing to him a psalm of praise.”

Verse 8: “God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne.”

Jeremiah 10:7-8: “Who should not revere you, O King of the nations? This is your due. Among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is no one like you. They are all senseless and foolish; they are taught by worthless wooden idols” (NIV).

It makes sense to let Him rule and reign.

Verse 9: “The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted.”

Psalm 109:27: “Let them see that this is your doing, That you yourself have done it, Lord” (NLT).

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” (NIV).

Revelation 19:6b-7b: “‘Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him...’” (NIV).

Let’s conclude our worship this morning by singing **“Thou Art Worthy”**: *Thou are 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.*”

May 28 — A Disgrace in the Eyes of God (Ps. 52:1-2)

Psalm 52:1: “Why do you boast of evil, you mighty man? Why do you boast all day long, you who are a disgrace in the eyes of God?”

Psalm 52:2: “Your tongue plots destruction; it is like a sharpened razor, you who practice deceit.”

David, when he writes this Psalm, is probably in his mid-20s. He has just had a tearful parting from Jonathan, his good friend. He is beginning, what I have called, the fugitive years. These are the years when he is fleeing from Saul, going from place to place. What a difficult road David has to the throne.

After leaving Jonathan, David went to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. David asked Ahimelech for some bread and a weapon.

He was given the sacred bread and the sword of Goliath.

1 Samuel 22:7: “Now one of Saul’s servants was there that day, detained before the Lord; he was Doeg the Edomite, Saul’s head shepherd” (NIV).

Don Wyrzten says: “Doeg’s career as a terrorist was built on slander, deceit, and intrigue. The tongue of this self-satisfied, clever man revealed his evil, corrupt character. His words, sharp as a razor, were used to destroy people and bring disgrace to God.”

Because of what Ahimelech did in providing the sword and the bread, King Saul finds out about it and we read in 1 Samuel 22:18-19: “The king then ordered Doeg, ‘You turn and strike down the priests.’ So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck them down. That day he killed eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. He also put to the sword Nob, the town of the priests, with its men and women, its children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys and sheep” (NIV).

When you read horrible atrocities like that, you are reminded of 9-11 and 3,000 innocent souls whose lives were taken. You think of Saddam Hussein and the thousands of lives he was responsible for. You think of Osama Bin Laden and the hundreds of thousands of lives he was responsible for. You also think of Hitler. Can you just image what it would be like to face eternity with past sin records like that? To stand before the eternal God in judgment?

It is this experience from the life of David that sets the stage for the writing of Psalm 52.

Verse 1: “Why do you boast of evil, you mighty man? Why do you boast all day long, you who are a disgrace in the eyes of God?”

This first verse is made up of 2 questions: (1) “Why do you boast of evil, you mighty man?”—You big shot! You big time operator! and (2) “Why do you boast all day long, you who are a disgrace in the eyes of God?”

Verse 2: “Your tongue plots destruction; it is like a sharpened razor, you who practice deceit.”

David, speaking of Doeg’s tongue, says 3 things about it. “Your tongue”: (1) “plots destruction”; (2) “is like a sharpened razor”; and (3) “practice[s] deceit.”

Psalm 10:7: “His mouth is full of curses and lies and threats; trouble and evil are under his tongue” (NIV).

John Phillips says:

What dreadful power there is in the tongue.

Speech is mightier than shot or sword,

A single word will stop an angry horde;

A crafty if, a but, a then or when

Will change the destinies and lives of men.

Its potency is subtle, strong and sure,

Against its might there’s nothing can endure

There’s a wonderful little hymn that I feel would express our feelings with regard to atrocities that have been permitted throughout human history. **“I Am Not Skilled”:** *“I am not skilled to understand What God hath will’d, what God hath plann’d; I only know at His right hand Stands One who is my Saviour. I take Him at His word indeed: ‘Christ died for sinners,’ this I read; And in my heart I find a need Of Him to be my Saviour. And was there then no other way For God to take? I cannot say; I only bless Him, day by day, Who saved me thro’ my Saviour. That He should leave His place on high, And come for sinful man to die, You count it strange? So once did I, Before I knew my Saviour.”*

May 29 — A Wicked Heart (Ps. 52:3-4)

Psalm 52:3: “You love evil rather than good, falsehood rather than speaking the truth. Selah”

Psalm 52:4: “You love every harmful word, O you deceitful tongue!”

Verse 3: “You love evil rather than good, falsehood rather than speaking the truth. Selah”

Isaiah 5:20-21: “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight” (NIV).

Oswald Chambers said: “The greatest test of a man’s character is his tongue.”

Verse 4: “You love every harmful word, O you deceitful tongue!”

Putting verses 3 and 4 together we see the Psalmist accuse Doeg by telling him he loves 3 things: (1) “evil rather than good”; (2) “falsehood rather than speaking the truth”; and (3) “every harmful word.”

Warren Wiersbe says: “We need to keep our tongues under control. They are capable of causing great damage. Beware of having a boastful or sharp tongue. Be careful that your tongue does not spread lies. And when others slander you, don’t reciprocate with your own tongue. Instead, use your tongue to glorify God and to speak of His goodness.”

Someone said: “When you find a pair of boots on the floor with a big ten-gallon hat on top of them, what have you got?...a Texan with all the hot air let out of him.”

On a windswept hill in an English country churchyard stands a drab, gray slate tombstone. On it are recorded these words:

Beneath this stone, a lump of clay,
lies Arabella Young,
Who on the twenty-fourth of May,
began to hold her tongue. (source unknown)

There are 3 scriptural illustrations of the power of the tongue: (1) Ahab and Jezebel—in working to get Naboth’s vineyard, cost Naboth his life; (2) the lies and false accusations in the death of Jesus; and (3) the Apostle Paul says “Alexander the Coppersmith did me a great deal of harm.”

Don Wyrzten prays this prayer: “O Lord, purify and purge me of deceit. Cleanse me on the inside so that my tongue sings only truth.”

I find myself singing that great old hymn “**We Have an Anchor.**” Please join me in singing a couple of verses: “*Will your anchor hold in the storms of life, When the clouds unfold their wings of strife? When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain, Will your anchor drift, or firm remain? It will firmly hold in the straits of fear, When the breakers have told the reef is near; Tho’ the tempest rage and the wild winds blow, Not an angry wave shall our bark o’erflow. We have an anchor that keeps the soul Steadfast and sure while the billows roll, Fastened to the Rock which cannot move, Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour’s love.*”

May 30 — God’s Judgment (Ps. 52:5)

Psalm 52:5: “Surely God will bring you down to everlasting ruin: He will snatch you up and tear you from your tent; he will uproot you from the land of the living. Selah”

Verse 5: “Surely God will bring you down to everlasting ruin: He will snatch you up and tear you from your tent; he will uproot you from the land of the living. Selah”

There are 3 things God will surely do: (1) “bring you down to everlasting ruin”; (2) “He will snatch you up and tear you from your tent”; and (3) “uproot you from the land of the living.”

Eugene Peterson in *The Message* paraphrases verse 5: “God will tear you limb from limb, sweep you up and throw you out, Pull you up by the roots from the land of life.”

It is amazing we have so many historical illustrations of what has just been said here in verse 5. You see with somber seriousness the deaths of Hitler, Saddam Hussein, Osama Bin Laden and others in history who met tragic deaths.

Matthew Henry said: “None so deaf as those who will not hear.”

Oswald Chambers said: “God’s will is hard only when it comes up against our stubbornness, then it is as cruel as a ploughshare and as devastating as an earthquake.”

One old cowboy said: “She is so determined to get her own way she writes her diary in advance.”

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).

What a different story mankind has to tell when he goes to Calvary and there comes to know Christ as Savior.

Join me in singing “**At Calvary**”: “*Years I spent in vanity and pride, Caring not my Lord was crucified, Knowing not it was for me He died On Calvary. By God’s Word at last my sin I learned, Then I trembled at the law I’d spurned, Till my guilty soul imploring turned To Calvary. Now I’ve giv’n to Jesus*

ev'rything; Now I gladly own Him as my King; Now my raptured soul can only sing Of Calvary. O, the love that drew salvation's plan! O, the grace that brought it down to man! O, the mighty gulf that God did span At Calvary! Mercy there was great, and grace was free; Pardon there was multiplied to me; There my burdened soul found liberty, At Calvary."

May 31 — The Wages of Sin is Death (Ps. 52:6-7)

Psalm 52:6: *"The righteous will see and fear; they will laugh at him, saying,"*

Psalm 52:7: *"Here now is the man who did not make God his stronghold but trusted in his great wealth and grew strong by destroying others!"*

Verse 6: *"The righteous will see and fear; they will laugh at him, saying,"*

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: "David then anticipated the joy that this would bring to the righteous. They would see what happens to a person who trusts not in the Lord but in his own ill-gotten riches for strength." (833)

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 righteous will see" and they are going to "fear" because they fully understand what is happening in the judgment of the wicked.

Matthew 23:37-38: "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. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!" (NASB).

As we now turn our attention toward verse 7 we get the message from the "righteous" as they see God's judgment take place.

Verse 7: *"Here now is the man who did not make God his stronghold but trusted in his great wealth and grew strong by destroying others!"*

There are 3 things Doeg did that caused him to be the recipient of divine judgment. He: (1) "did not make God his stronghold"; (2) "trusted in his great wealth"; and (3) "grew strong by destroying others."

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).

Warren Wiersbe says: "God is your strength and confidence. Don't be like the self-sufficient person, who trusts in the world's substitutes for strength and confidence. Let the Word of God permeate your mind and hide its truth in your heart. Place yourself in God's care and let Him establish you."

Oswald Chambers said: "Money and marriage...are the two things that make men and women devils or saints."

The Florida Boys sing a great song called **"Saved by Grace."** Maybe you have never heard it or don't know the tune, but the words are so great and appropriate for this particular study: *"He was a good man, he loved his wife. All in all, he lived a quiet and decent life; He helped his neighbor, he raised his kids, But trusting Jesus is one thing he never did. Yes, we should follow, where Jesus trod, And make ourselves a living sacrifice to God; But still we stumble as mortal men, Praise Jesus' name, He paid the debt for every sin. We stand condemned under the law. When we break one, we're guilty of them all; Deserving death, we need no alibi, Pardoned by the law of Christ. [Chorus] It's true, the road to hell is paved with good intentions, For not by our good works are sin and death erased; It's by Jesus' blood alone, we're forgiven and atoned; Through our faith, we're saved by grace; Through our faith, we're saved by grace."* (Tommy Clark: Carless Weed Music / BMI)

June 1 — I Made the Right Choice (Ps. 52:8-9)

Psalm 52:8: *"But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever."*

Psalm 52:9: *"I will praise you forever for what you have done; in your name I will hope, for your name is good. I will praise you in the presence of your saints."*

Verse 8: “But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God’s unfailing love for ever and ever.”

The blessed “But” forms the contrast. Whereas, this is Doeg’s life that has been described in verses 1-7, now we are going to look at David’s life in verses 8 and 9.

Psalm 1:3: “He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers” (NIV).

Jeremiah 17:7-8: “But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit” (NIV).

David, in contrast to Doeg, has made God his stronghold.

Psalm 119:114: “You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word” (NIV).

There are 3 things David says about himself here: (1) he is “flourishing in the house of God”; (2) he is trusting “in God’s unfailing love”; and (3) “I will praise you forever.”

Wiersbe says: “David was planted, productive and praising God.”

Fénelon said: “True humility comes from seeking the interests of God before your own. Humility comes in no longer living for yourself but in letting Jesus Christ live His life in you.” (*The Seeking Heart*, 158)

Verse 9: “I will praise you forever for what you have done; in your name I will hope, for your name is good. I will praise you in the presence of your saints.”

David says: “In your name I will hope” and “your name is good.”

Don Wyrzten prays: “Your unending, unfailing love, O God, inspires me to proclaim my faith in You wherever your saints gather for worship.”

When songwriter Stuart Hamblen went to the Billy Graham crusade in Los Angeles and came to know Jesus Christ, he wrote a great hymn to tell his story. I would like for us to read the words and hum along and sing if you know the tune to **“It Is No Secret (What God Can Do)”**: *The chimes of time ring out the news, another day is through, Someone slipped and fell, Was that someone you? You may have longed for added strength, Your courage to renew, Do not be disheartened, For I bring hope to you. (There) is no night, for in His light you’ll never walk alone, Always feel at home wherever you may roam. There is no power can conquer you, While God is on your side, Just take Him at His promise, Don’t run away and hide. It is no secret what God can do, What He’s done for others, He’ll do for you. With arms wide open, He’ll pardon you, It is no secret, What God can do.*”

June 2 — Save and Vindicate Me (Ps. 54:1)

Psalm 54:1: “Save me, O God, by your name; vindicate me by your might.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “This is a confident prayer of David when he, being pursued by Saul, was betrayed by ‘the Ziphites’... Though David was being hotly pursued by ungodly men who sought his life, he confidently trusted in the Lord’s abilities for complete deliverance.” (834)

In Psalm 52 we had Doeg the Edomite. Now here in Psalm 54 it was at Keilah that the people betrayed David to Saul.

Jonathan came to him and helped him find strength in God.

Steven Lawson titles this Psalm: “With Help From Above.” He then quotes D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: “I sometimes think that the very essence of the whole Christian position and the secret of a successful spiritual life is just to realize two things... I must have complete, absolute confidence in God and no confidence in myself.”

Verse 1: “Save me, O God, by your name; vindicate me by your might.”

There are 2 requests here in verse 1: (1) “Save me, O God, by your name” and (2) “vindicate me by your might.”

So it is “Save me...by your name” and “vindicate me by your might.”

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).

Lawson says: “God’s name represents all that God is, the sum total of his perfect attributes. Vindicate me by your might is a call by David for God to prove David’s innocence by rescuing him.”

David has got to feel devastated by all that has taken place with the slaughter of the priests by Doeg the Edmonite and now to be betrayed by the folks in Keilah. David has delivered them from the Philistines and they betray his whereabouts to King Saul.

Jeremiah says: “Since my people are crushed, I am crushed; I mourn, and horror grips me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people?” (Jer. 8:21-22 NIV).

Let’s sing that old hymn of affirmation **“There Is a Balm in Gilead”**: *“Sometimes I feel discouraged, And think my work’s in vain, But then the Holy Spirit Revives my soul again. If you cannot preach like Peter, If you cannot pray like Paul, You can tell the love of Jesus And say, ‘He died for all.’ There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole; There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.”*

June 3 — Hear My Prayer (Ps. 54:2-3)

Psalm 54:2: “Hear my prayer, O God; listen to the words of my mouth.”

Psalm 54:3: “Strangers are attacking me; ruthless men seek my life—men without regard for God. Selah”

Verse 2: “Hear my prayer, O God; listen to the words of my mouth.”

Daniel 9:19: “O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name” (NIV).

There are 2 requests here in verse 2: (1) “Hear my prayer” and (2) “listen to the words of my mouth.”

You can sense the urgency of the situation by the words David uses in these opening verses: “Save,” “vindicate,” “hear,” and “listen.”

David certainly has to feel a tremendous level of stress at this point. He has Saul chasing him to take his life. Doeg has killed the priests. Kileah betrayed him to Saul’s forces. The Ziphites who are part of his own tribe, the tribe of Judah, betrayed him as well.

Don Wyrzten asks the questions: “How do I respond under pressure? Am I paralyzed by fear? Do I panic? Do I try to escape? Do I withdraw? Do I become depressed? Do I use medication? David, hotly pursued by his enemies, knows that he is in mortal danger.”

Verse 3: “Strangers are attacking me; ruthless men seek my life—men without regard for God. Selah”

David is describing the Ziphites in 3 ways. They are: (1) “Strangers”; (2) “ruthless”; and (3) “without regard for God.” He also says they are doing 3 things to him. They are: (1) “attacking me”; (2) “seek[ing] my life”; and (3) “slander[ing] me.”

If David had been aware of what a friend we have in Jesus, he would have been singing with great meaning and purpose that last verse: “Do thy friend 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.”

Bill Bright in one of his last books said: “Difficulties and suffering are tools with which He shapes us into the image of Jesus Christ. It is never fun to be enrolled in the academy of adversity, but unless God takes us through the curriculum of trials, we will never become the quality persons He wants us to be. Romans 5:3-5 explains this process. It shows adversity can become the touchstone of character.” (*The Journey Home*, 78)

I feel it would be appropriate for us to sing a couple of verses from Fanny Crosby’s great hymn, **“Draw Me Nearer”**: *“I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice, And it told Thy love to me; But I long to rise in the arms of faith, And be closer drawn to Thee. O, the pure delight of a single hour That before Thy throne I spend, When I kneel in prayer, and with Thee, my God, I commune as friend with friend!”*

Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To the cross where Thou hast died; Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, To Thy precious, bleeding side."

June 4 — My Help and My Sustainer (Ps. 54:4-5)

Psalm 54:4: *"Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me."*

Psalm 54:5: *"Let evil recoil on those who slander me; in your faithfulness destroy them."*

Verse 4: "Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me."

Eugene Peterson paraphrases verse 4: "Oh, look! God's right here helping! God's on my side." There are 2 things here in verse 4: (1) "God is my help" and (2) "the Lord is the one who sustains me."

"God is my help" reminds me of 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).

The fact He "sustains me" reminds me of 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).

Don't you feel like singing "Our God, our Help in ages past, Our Hope for years to come; Be thou our Guard while troubles last, And our eternal Home."

It was Helen Keller who said: "I have been given so much that I have no time to ponder over that which has been denied!"

Verse 5: "Let evil recoil on those who slander me; in your faithfulness destroy them."

Here we have the prayer petition: "Let evil recoil on those who slander me."

Those he is praying against here in this prayer are those described back in verse 3 as: "Strangers," "ruthless," and "without regard for God."

They are those who "slander me." Back in verse 3 they were attacking him and seeking his life. Now the third part of that is they are slandering him.

He concludes verse 5 with the words: "in your faithfulness destroy them."

Psalm 108:4: "For great is your love, higher than the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies" (NIV).

1 Thessalonians 5:24: "Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass" (NASB).

Join me in our time of worship by singing one of Charles Wesley's great hymns, "**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! 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. Thou, O Christ, art all I want, More than all in Thee I find; Raise the fallen, cheer the faint, Heal the sick and lead the blind. Just and holy is Thy name, I am all unrighteousness; False and full of sin I am, Thou art full of truth and grace."*

June 5 — I Will Praise Your Name (Ps. 54:6-7)

Psalm 54:6: *"I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you; I will praise your name, O Lord, for it is good."*

Psalm 54:7: *"For he has delivered me from all my troubles, and my eyes have looked in triumph on my foes."*

Verse 6: "I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you; I will praise your name, O Lord, for it is good."

The Psalmist says he will do 2 things: (1) "I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you" and (2) "I will praise your name, O Lord."

He then states the reason for these acts in the final phrase: "for it is good." The word "it" refers back to His name. This is the second time we have the statement of "your name": (1) verse 1—"Save me, O God, by your name" and now (2) verse 6—"I will praise your name."

Psalm 119:68: "You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees" (NIV).

Henry Blackaby says: "Seek to bring every physical desire under the control of the Holy Spirit so that nothing will impede your accomplishing what Jesus asks of you." (*Experiencing God Day-By-Day*, 85)

It's followed with this prayer: "Lord, keep me from missing opportunities to do Your work by being consumed with my own agenda."

Ruth Myers in *31 Days of Power* says: "I praise You that You are exalted high above all. You're the Ruler over everything and everyone" (23)

Verse 7: "For he has delivered me from all my troubles, and my eyes have looked in triumph on my foes."

There are 2 things the Lord has done here in verse 7: (1) "he has delivered me from all my troubles" and (2) "my eyes have looked in triumph on my foes."

J. Vernon McGee says: "We know from the historical record that God did deliver David from treacherous Ziphites, and the faithful remnant can rest in the confidence that God will deliver them also. God will surely keep His promises."

I find myself, in this midst of this study, stopping to sing "Find Us Faithful": "We're pilgrims on the journey Of the narrow road And those who've gone before us line the way Cheering on the faithful, encouraging the weary Their lives a stirring testament to God's sustaining grace 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 The heritage of faithfulness passed on through godly lives. Oh 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." (John Mohr)

Let's conclude our worship by singing "**Blessed Be the Name**": "*All praise to Him who reigns above In majesty supreme, Who gave His Son for man to die, That he might man redeem! Redeemer, Saviour, Friend of man Once ruined by the fall, Thou hast devised salvation's plan, For Thou hast died for all. Blessed be the name, blessed be the name, Blessed be the name of the Lord! Blessed be the name, blessed be the name, Blessed be the name of the Lord!*"

June 6 — In the Shadow of Your Wings (Ps. 57:1)

Psalm 57:1: "*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.*"

Psalm 57 is the Cave Psalm. David is in Engedi hiding from Saul. We see the record of it in 1 Samuel 24:1: "After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, 'David is in the Desert of En Gedi'" (NIV).

Warren Wiersbe says: "This psalm and Psalm 142 are 'cave' psalms that can give you great encouragement. Your own 'cave' may be a sickroom, a difficult place of ministry, or even a home where there is tension or trouble. If you do what David did, you will experience peace and victory even in the cave."

Verse 1: "Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed."

Psalm 56:1: "Be merciful to me, O God, for men hotly pursue me; all day long they press their attack" (NIV).

The repetition of this first request, "Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me," helps us understand the intensity of the situation David finds himself in at this time.

Having called upon the Lord for mercy, the Psalmist states the reason in the remainder of verse 1: "for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings under the disaster has passed."

It is "in you" and "in the shadow of your wings" where "I will take refuge."

Psalm 17:8: "Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings" (NIV).

Psalm 36:7: "How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings" (NIV).

Psalm 63:7: "Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings" (NIV).

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" (NIV).

Let's meditate upon a few verses as we conclude our time in verse 1.

Ruth 2:12: "May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge" (NIV).

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).

Colossians 3:3: "For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (NASB).

Isaiah 32:2: "Each man will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the storm, like streams of water in the desert and the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land" (NIV).

"For in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings." Following this statement he says: "under the disaster has passed"—that is, the storms of destruction.

I will stay in the storm shelter until the tornadoes of trouble have passed by!

As we worship and praise the Lord, let's take time to sing "**Beneath the Cross of Jesus**":

"Beneath the cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand, The shadow of a mighty Rock Within a weary land; A home within the wilderness, A rest upon the way, From the burning of the noon-tide heat, And the burden of the day. I take, O cross, thy shadow for my abiding place; I ask no other sunshine than The sunshine of His face; Content to let the world go by, To know no gain nor loss, My sinful self my only shame, My glory all the cross."

June 7 — Love and Faithfulness (Ps. 57:2-3)

Psalm 57:2: "*I cry out to God Most High, to God, who fulfills [his purpose] for me.*"

Psalm 57:3: "*He sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me; Selah God sends his love and his faithfulness.*"

Verse 2: "I cry out to God Most High, to God, who fulfills [his purpose] for me."

David describes his prayer as a "cry" here in verse 2. He characterizes God in 2 ways: (1) "God Most High" and (2) "God, who fulfills [his purpose] for me."

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).

Ephesians 2:10: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (NASB).

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" (NIV).

I'm sure David is asking the question, "Does Jesus really care?" The answer is Yes! He has cared enough in the past to provide salvation through the gift of His Son. He does care for us in the present in that He intercedes continuously for us before the throne of God. He will manifest that care in the future day when we dwell in that mansion of glory and participate in His glorious kingdom.

Verse 3: "He sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me; Selah God sends his love and his faithfulness."

Here in verse 3 we have true answered prayer "He sends from heaven."

There are 3 things God does here in response to David's prayer: (1) "He sends"—that is, His sovereignty—receiving David and "rebuking those who hotly pursue [him]"; (2) "He...sends his love"; and (3) "He sends...his faithfulness."

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?" (NASB).

Does the Lord really care? You better believe that He cares! "He sends from heaven" the resources to not only "save" us but to rebuke "those who hotly pursue [us]."

"He sends," along with the sovereign intervention, "his love and his faithfulness."

Let's conclude our moments of meditation by worshiping the Lord and singing **"Moment by Moment"**: *"Never a trial that He is not there, Never a burden that He doth not bear, Never a sorrow that He doth not share, Moment by moment, I'm under His care. Never a heartache and never a groan, Never a tear-drop and never a moan; Never a danger, but there on the throne, Moment by moment, He thinks of His own. Moment by moment I'm kept in His love; Moment by moment I've life from above; Looking to Jesus till glory doth shine; Moment by moment, O Lord, I am Thine."*

June 8 — Be Exalted, O God! (Ps. 57:4-5)

Psalm 57:4: *"I am in the midst of lions; I lie among ravenous beasts—men whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords."*

Psalm 57:5: *"Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth."*

Verse 4: "I am in the midst of lions; I lie among ravenous beasts—men whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords."

David almost sounds like Daniel after his night in the lion's den.

Daniel 6:21-22: "Daniel answered, 'O king, live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king'" (NIV).

Psalm 3:1-2: "O Lord, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! Many are saying of me, 'God will not deliver him.' Selah" (NIV).

1 Peter 5:8: "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (NASB).

David is a picture of the soldier walking through the mine fields, the sailor in a sea full of torpedoes, the airman in the sky full of enemy planes, and the marine landing on the beach in a spray of bullets.

But where do we find him? We find him in peace and at rest because of the sovereign God's control of all the circumstances that surround him.

Psalm 3:5-6: "I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me. I will not fear the tens of thousands drawn up against me on every side" (NIV).

Isaiah 26:3: "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you" (NIV).

Verse 5: "Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth."

Here we have an outburst of praise in verse 5. Then the Psalm is concluded with an outburst of praise in verse 11.

Delitzsch titles this verse: "Cheerful Submission."

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).

Can you think of a more appropriate hymn for us to conclude our meditation this morning than **"Hiding In Thee"**? *"O safe to the Rock that is higher than I, My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly; So sinful, so weary, Thine, Thine would I be; Thou blest Rock of Ages, I'm hiding in Thee. In the calm of the noon-tide, in sorrow's lone hour, In times when temptation casts o'er me its pow'r; In the tempests of life, on its wide, heaving sea, Thou blest Rock of Ages, I'm hiding in Thee. How oft in the conflict, when pressed by the foe, I have fled to my Refuge and breathed out my woe; How often, when trials like sea-billows roll, Have I hidden in Thee, O Thou Rock of my soul. Hiding in Thee, Hiding in Thee, Thou blest Rock of Ages, I'm hiding in Thee."*

June 9 — My Heart is Steadfast (Ps. 57:6-7)

Psalm 57:6: *"They spread a net for my feet—I was bowed down in distress. They dug a pit in my path—but they have fallen into it themselves. Selah"*

Psalm 57:7: *"My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music."*

Verse 6: "They spread a net for my feet—I was bowed down in distress. They dug a pit in my path—but they have fallen into it themselves. Selah"

The enemy here has done 3 things: (1) "They spread a net"; (2) "They dug a pit"; and (3) "they have fallen into it."

2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (NASB).

David says in the middle of verse 6: "I was bowed down in distress."

Paul confesses a similar situation in 2 Corinthians 1:8-9: "For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead" (NASB).

"They dug a pit in my path—but they have fallen into it themselves. Selah."

Psalm 60:12: "With God we will gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies" (NIV).

Verse 7: "My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music."

In verse 6 the Psalmist was "bowed down," now in verse 7 "My heart is steadfast." What a wonderful contrast.

One thing in life we need to learn is we can go farther, do more, and endure more stress than we think we can as we press toward the finish line.

Jonathan Edwards said: "Resolved, never to do anything which I would be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life."

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).

The fixed heart can find it can sing a song in the midst of the storm.

Let's sing together that very familiar and wonderful hymn "**Trust and Obey**": *"Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies, But His smile quickly drives it away; Not a doubt nor a fear, not a sigh nor a tear, Can abide while we trust and obey. Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share, But our toil He doth richly repay; Not a grief nor a loss, not a frown nor a cross, But is blest if we trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there's no other way To be happy in Jesus, But to trust and obey."*

June 10 — Awake My Soul! (Ps. 57:8-9)

Psalm 57:8: "Awake, my soul! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn."

Psalm 57:9: "I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples."

Verse 8: "Awake, my soul! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn."

David is going to greet the dawn with a song.

Malachi 4:2: "But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings..." (NIV).

Psalm 5:3: "Morning by morning, O Lord, you hear my voice; morning by morning, I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation" (NIV).

Psalm 143:8: "Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul" (NIV).

Mark 1:35: "And in the early morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there" (NASB).

Verse 9: "I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples."

How crucial and critical it is that the first thing we do in the morning before we start the day is to have our meeting with the Lord in His Word and a time to sing His praises.

Let's conclude our meditation this morning by singing "**Because 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 reigns. 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."*

June 11 — Let Your Glory Be Over All the Earth! (Ps. 57:10-11)

Psalm 57:10: *“For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.”*

Psalm 57:11: *“Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth.”*

Verse 10: “For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.”

Now David gives the reason why he will “praise [the] Lord among the nations [and] among the peoples.” The reason is 2-fold: (1) “For great is your love, reaching to the heavens” and (2) “your faithfulness reaches to the skies.”

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).

Eugene Peterson paraphrases verse 10: “The deeper your love, the higher it goes; every cloud is a flag to your faithfulness.”

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?”

Robert Fulghum has written a book called *True Love* that records stories of human love and devotion. He shares this story. On their 59th wedding anniversary the wife and mother had a stroke. The husband and father became a permanent resident of the nursing home:

And so has my father—not as a resident there, but as a daily, without fail, visitor. Most of every day he is there—feeding her, massaging her wasted muscles, reading to her, telling her of any news from distant friends and family, giving her back rubs, singing little songs, showing her family photo albums, watching over her in every way he can to help her be more comfortable....

So, this is what my Dad, Raymond Doyen, has taught me about devotion and caring and compassion and love and duty—and he has never been one to give advice...only the example of his life. (Anne Joeri Doyen Perrin)

John 15:13: “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends” (NASB).

Verse 11: “Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth.”

This wonderful outburst of praise is similar to what we had back in verse 5.

It is that because David is taking time to pray and to lay things before the Lord. So many times when you leave the Lord’s presence from your time of prayer, there is this certainty that God is going to intervene and work and you have confidence of a certain victory.

Wiersbe asks: “Do your circumstances have you under siege? Do you find yourself in a ‘cave’? Be encouraged that God will protect you and intervene for you. Be concerned about His glory, not your own. Take time today to praise Him for His care.”

Wiersbe says further: “When you are in a tight place, your great concern should not be how you can get out of it but how God will be glorified because of it.”

Fénelon said: “Remember that you are not called to be well-served, but to serve Him well. Learn to be gentle and patient with all that disturbs you.”

My lips are singing your praise, even in the midst of these unexplainable difficult circumstances.

Wyrzten prays: “My prayer, O God Most High, is that Your purpose will be fulfilled in my life and that Your glory may shine through my personality.”

I would suggest as we conclude our study of Psalm 57 and our devotional period today that we sing that great hymn **“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. 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. 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.”*

June 12 — My Soul Yearns (Ps. 84:1-2)

Psalm 84:1: "How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty!"

Psalm 84:2: "My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God."

C.H. Spurgeon calls Psalm 84 the "Pearl of the Psalms."

The Psalm itself is attached to the Psalms of the sons of Korah but this might have to do with musical performance rather than the actual writing of the Psalm. It has David's fingerprints all over the words of this great Psalm.

Verse 1: "How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty!"

Kidner says: "*How lovely* is more exactly 'How dear' or 'How beloved'; it is the language of love poetry. Psalms 42:4; 43:4 give a glimpse of the delight which a dedicated servant of the temple found in his role—a joy quite foreign to the uncommitted..."

Plumer says: "Patrick's paraphrase is: 'It is impossible to express the affection I have to thy dwelling-place, O Lord.'"

I read the following story in *God's Little Daily Devotional*:

Newspaper columnist and minister George Crane tells of a wife who came to his office full of hatred toward her husband. Fully intending to divorce her husband, she said, "Before I divorce him, I want to hurt him as much as he has me."

Crane advised that she go home and act as if she really loved her husband. "Tell him how much he means to you," he said. "Praise him for every decent trait. Go out of your way to be as kind, considerate, and generous as possible. Spare no efforts to please him, to enjoy him. Make him believe you love him...then drop the bomb...That will really hurt him."

The woman exclaimed, "Beautiful!" And she did as he had suggested with enthusiasm, acting as if she loved him. Two months later she returned to Crane, who asked, "Are you ready to go through with the divorce?"

"Divorce!" she said. "Never! I discovered I really do love him!" (235)

Verse 2: "My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God."

In this verse we have the "soul," the "heart," and the "flesh." The key words are: "yearns"—or longs for; "faints"—exhausted with desire; and "cry out."

"My soul yearns, even faints...[and] my heart and my flesh cry out."

C.H. Spurgeon said: "The desire was deep and insatiable—the very soul of the man was yearning for his God."

Frederick B. Meyer said: "Even though I am busy, my relationship with God deserves top priority above all other demands on my time."

Let's ask ourselves a couple of questions before we sing our hymn of worship: (1) What is your passion? and (2) What is your single focus?

"My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God."

Psalm 18:46: "The Lord lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God my Savior!" (NIV).

I'd like for us to praise and worship the Lord with one of Andrae Crouch's great songs, "**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! 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!*"

June 13 — A Place Near Your Altar (Ps. 84:3-4)

Psalm 84:3: "Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young—a place near your altar, O Lord Almighty, my King and my God."

Psalm 84:4: "Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. Selah"

Verse 3: "Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young—a place near your altar, O Lord Almighty, my King and my God."

Now the Psalmist turns to an illustration of the sparrow and the swallow.

The 3 key thoughts on the mind of the Psalmist is: (1) “a home”; (2) “a nest”; and (3) “a place.”

This is the second time we have reference to “O Lord Almighty.” It occurred back in verse 1: “How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty!” Now we see it here again in verse 3: “O Lord Almighty.”

The Psalmist continues by speaking personally about the “Lord Almighty.” He is “my King and my God.”

C.H. Spurgeon said: “He envied the sparrows which lived around the house of God, and picked up the stray crumbs in the courts thereof; he only wished that he, too, could frequent the solemn assemblies and bear away a little of the heavenly food.”

Verse 4: “Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. Selah”

The Psalmist will use the word “Blessed” 3 times in these remaining verses. We have the references in verses 4, 5 and 12.

“Blessed are those”: (1) “who dwell in your house” and (2) “they are ever praising you. Selah.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: “Worthwhile blessings and gifts always come from God’s free response to our obedience and faith. We can only really thank God for what He freely gives, not for what we have demanded.” (Ringma, *Seize the Day*, July 3)

Fanny Crosby has written a great hymn that seems to fit our thinking this morning as we talk about being near to the altar. Her hymn is called “**Near the Cross.**” Let’s sing verses 1 and 4: “*Jesus, keep me near the cross, There a precious fountain Free to all, a healing stream, Flows from Calv’ry’s mountain. Near the cross I’ll watch and wait, Hoping, trusting ever, Till I reach the golden stand Just beyond the river. In the cross, in the cross Be my glory ever; Till my raptured soul shall find Rest beyond the river.*”

June 14 — Whose Strength is in You (Ps. 84:5-6)

Psalm 84:5: “*Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.*”

Psalm 84:6: “*As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools.*”

Verse 5: “Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.”

Back in verse 4 we learned the “Blessed [ones] are those who dwell in your house [and] they are ever praising you.”

Now here in verse 5 we learn those who are “Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.”

Colossians 1:11: “strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously” (NASB).

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).

Isaiah 40:30-31: “Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; 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).

Verse 6: “As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “The Valley of Baca...was apparently a waterless place that became a place of springs. The rains would cover the arid valley with pools of water, a vivid picture of God’s blessings on the faithful pilgrims.” (855)

They were a people who were using the dry times to refresh others.

You have a similar situation in John 4 when the woman at the well discovers there is a “Living Water”: “but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life” (4:14 NASB).

Psalm 65:9-11: “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. You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops. You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance” (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).

Psalm 126:3: “The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy” (NIV).

Among the collections of John W. Peterson’s wonderful hymns, I found this one called **“It’s Not An Easy Road.”** I would like for us to sing this as we conclude our worship this morning: *“It’s not an easy road we are trav’ling to Heaven, For many are the thorns on the way; It’s not an easy road but the Saviour is with us, His presence gives us joy ev’ry day. It’s not an easy road there are trials and troubles, And many are the dangers we meet; But Jesus guards and keeps so that nothing can harm us, And smooths the rugged path for our feet. Though I am often foot-sore and weary from travel, Though I am often bowed down with care; A better day is coming when Home in the glory, We’ll rest in perfect peace over there. No, no, it’s not an easy road, No, no it’s not an easy road; But Jesus walks beside me and brightens the journey, And lightens ev’ry heavy load.”*

June 15 — From Strength to Strength (Ps. 84:7-8)

Psalm 84:7: “*They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.*”

Psalm 84:8: “*Hear my prayer, O Lord God Almighty; listen to me, O God of Jacob. Selah*”

Verse 7: “They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.”

Eugene Peterson paraphrases verse 7: “God-traveled, these roads curve up the mountain, and at the last turn—Zion! God in full view!”

“They go from strength to strength.” This takes us back to verse 5: “Blessed are those whose strength is in you.”

C.H. Spurgeon said: “So far from being wearied they gather strength as they proceed. Each individual becomes happier, each company becomes more numerous, each holy song more sweet and full. We grow as we advance if heaven be our goal.”

Perowne says: “FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH, ever renewing it, in spite of the toils of the way, and in view of the journey’s end...”

Don Wyrzten prays: “O Lord Almighty, help me to love Your place and Your people. May I draw strength from my fellow pilgrims, my brothers and sisters in Christ.”

Back in the 70s when I was into running marathons, I was on a Saturday morning run with a dear friend Doug. When I reached the top of the last rise in the road with 2 miles stretching out to the finish line, I had a great urge to stop running and start walking. Doug came by and with a simple statement helped me finish those last 2 miles. His words: “The rest of it is a piece of cake!”

God is there to provide strength for the present demands upon us, and totally adequate strength to make a strong finish. Get over your pity party of pain and press on for a fantastic finish.

Verse 8: “Hear my prayer, O Lord God Almighty; listen to me, O God of Jacob. Selah”

The Psalmist says no matter what, keep on praying.

Bill Hybels gives us the 6 causes of unanswered prayer: 1) not praying, 2) unconfessed sin, 3) broken relationships, 4) selfishness, 5) uncaring attitude, 6) inadequate faith. (*Campus Life*, Sept. 1989, p. 40)

If indeed we are going to persevere and press on and make a strong finish, it’s going to be through the strength of the One who indwells us. Therefore it is absolutely necessary we keep the prayer lines open and use them on a daily basis.

Let’s sing another one of Stuart Hamblen’s great songs, **“Until Then”**: *“My heart can sing when I pause to remember, A heartache here is but a stepping stone Along a trail that’s winding always*

upwards, This troubled world is not my final home. The things of earth will dim and lose their value If we recall they're borrowed for a while And things of earth that cause the heart to tremble, Remembered there will only bring a smile. This weary world with all its toil and struggle May take its toll of misery and strife The soul of man is like a waiting falcon, When it's released it's destined for the skies, But until then my heart will go on singing, Until then with joy I'll carry on, Until the day my eyes behold the city, Until the day God calls me home."

June 16 — A Doorkeeper in the House of My God (Ps. 84:9-10)

Psalm 84:9: *"Look upon our shield, O God; look with favor on your anointed one."*

Psalm 84:10: *"Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked."*

Verse 9: "Look upon our shield, O God; look with favor on your anointed one."

The people considered the king as the human shield between them and God. He was considered the "anointed one."

What a picture we have of the Lord Jesus as He is our "shield" before a holy God. He is the "anointed one."

He makes 2 requests in verse 9: (1) "Look upon our shield" and (2) "look with favor on your anointed one."

Verse 10: "Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked."

The Psalmist is declaring his position. He has an attitude of gratitude. He accepts with brokenness reality and declares his choice.

In her book *Brokenness*, Nancy Leigh DeMoss tells this story: "

When Melanie Adams finally came to the end of herself and was broken before God and her husband, God began to increase her capacity for love and for worship. Several months after that initial point of brokenness, Melanie wrote to tell some of the changes that had taken place in her life as a result:

I have fallen in love with my husband more deeply than ever. It was quite a rude awakening to realize the chasm in our marriage was my fault, born of an unforgiving heart. My husband has forgiven me and I smile at the future.

I have developed the somewhat frustrating habit of crying all the time—not a normal response for me. In church, a song of worship or a meaningful message finds me borrowing my husband's handkerchief as he gently pats my hand.

God's Word jumps off the page every time I open His Holy Book—it is personal now. I enjoy a sweet communion with the Lord and have heartfelt gratitude for His love and sacrifice that I never knew before. I have peace and joy, and He has given me a new song. (116-117)

Speaking of a new song, Let's sing one by Fanny Crosby this morning. **"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. 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. 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."*

June 17 — Blessed is the Man Who Trusts in You (Ps. 84:11-12)

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."*

Psalm 84:12: *"O Lord Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you."*

Verse 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."

Verse 11 begins with the word “For.” We now have the reason why it is better to have one day in the courts of the Lord than a thousand elsewhere.

“The Lord God” is 2 things: (1) “sun” and (2) “shield.”

We learn that “the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.”

Proverbs 2:7-8: “He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones” (NIV).

Psalm 16:2: “I said to the Lord, ‘You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing’” (NIV).

Psalm 34:10: “The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing” (NIV).

Warren Wiersbe says: “He is a *sun*. That’s provision and sufficiency. He is a *shield*. That’s protection and security.”

Wiersbe says further: “Psalm 84:11 is a great verse to claim for your pilgrim journey. Begin with God’s grace and end in His glory.”

Don Wyrzten says: “The Lord is pictured as a ‘sun and shield.’ He offers warmth, blessing, protection, and prosperity. He does not withhold anything good from those whose walk with Him is *blameless*...”

Carolyn Custis James says: “Life is hard. Not one of us will make it through unscathed. We ask too much of ourselves and go against our own instincts when we try to trust a God who is essentially a stranger to us. Even when his plan for us makes the least sense from our point of view, our faith will find a foothold when we know his character, when we are confident that he never drops his scepter but rules all things for our good and his glory. Hope in that kind of God is impossible to extinguish.” (*When Life and Beliefs Collide*, 233)

Verse 12: “O Lord Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you.”

During a challenging time in Steve and Mary Farrar’s life, Steve gives this record of his conversation with Mary: “Mary’s response over the phone from her hospital bed to all this was, ‘Steve, that’s fine. We don’t need to go there. God knows what he’s doing, and He’s the One who will take care of us.’ It helps to have a wife who has a grip on the sovereignty of God.” (*Tempered Steel*, 132)

Jack Terry, a Christian cowboy, wrote a book called *Prayers Along the Trail*. I love his prayer: “Lord, I thank You that You’ve put me here with a job I love to do; Never was much on schoolin’, thought I’d leave the thinking mostly up to You. You’ve taught me right from wrong and how to work upon this land. You’ve fed my family, warmed our home, and made our lives so grand.” (18)

Wyrzten prays: “O Lord, today I rededicate my life to Your service. Be my Sun and Shield, and give me the satisfaction of knowing that my walk is worthy of my calling.”

Join me in singing **“Trusting Jesus”**: “*Simply trusting ev’ry day, Trusting thru a stormy way; Even when my faith is small, Trusting Jesus, that is all. Trusting Him while life shall last, Trusting Him till earth be past; Till within the jasper wall: Trusting Jesus, that is all. Trusting as the moments fly, Trusting as the days go by; Trusting Him what e’er be fall, Trusting Jesus, that is all.*”

June 18 — It is Good to Praise the Lord (Ps. 92:1-2)

Psalm 92:1: “*It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High,*”

Psalm 92:2: “*to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night,*”

Verse 1: “It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High,”

Warren Wiersbe says: “It is good to thank the Lord *for every day He gives you*... As the day begins, you can look ahead by faith and praise Him for His loving-kindness. As the day ends, you can look back and praise Him for His faithfulness.”

“It is good” to do 2 things, according to verse 1: (1) “to praise the Lord” and (2) “make music to your name, O Most High.”

There is nothing more joyful than happy, positive, radiant saints!

Williams says: “Verse 1 begins with an affirmation of worship: *‘It is good [fulfilling and right] to give thanks to the Lord.*”

It is acceptable and pleasing to the Lord for us to praise Him.

Ron Allen says: "Praise is vocal, it is public, and it must be genuine."

Verse 2: "to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night,"

This is a wonderful habit to get into to express your love first thing in the morning and to speak of His faithfulness at night.

In looking at these first 2 verses, let us see 4 things it is good to do. "It is good": (1) "to praise the Lord"; (2) "to...make music to your name, O Most High"; (3) "to proclaim your love in the morning" and (4) "to proclaim...your faithfulness at night."

Scroggie says: "...what in the morning the LORD promises, he has by night performed."

Wiersbe says: "Each day has its own set of burdens, blessings and challenges. How you begin and end a day determines what kind of day you will have. Begin your day with lovingkindness. Praise God and thank Him during the day. In the evening, remember His faithfulness during the day. What a great recipe for living a day at a time!"

There are 3 things: (1) Live each day just one day at a time; (2) bracket it with lovingkindness in the "morning and faithfulness at night"; and (3) live it to the fullest. Someone said: "Live each day as though it were your last and one day you will be right!"

As we conclude our worship time this morning, I would suggest we sing a hymn called "**Before the Throne of God Above.**" This is an old hymn written back in the 1800's. It has had a recent resurrection as it is a hymn that is included on one of the Selah albums. *"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. No tongue can bid me thence depart. When Satan tempts me to despair And tells me of the guilt within Upward I look and see Him there Who made an end of all my sin. Because the sinless Savior died My sinful soul is counted free For God, the Just, is satisfied To look on Him and pardon me. To look on Him and pardon me. Behold Him there! The risen Lamb My perfect, spotless, Righteousness. The Great unchangeable I AM The King of Glory and of Grace. One with 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."*

June 19 — I Sing For Joy (Ps. 92:3-4)

Psalm 92:3: "to the music of the ten-stringed lyre and the melody of the harp."

Psalm 92:4: "For you make me glad by your deeds, O Lord; I sing for joy at the works of your hands."

Verse 3: "to the music of the ten-stringed lyre and the melody of the harp."

I almost feel like starting the study by singing "O for a thousand tongues to sing My great Redeemer's praise, The glories of my God and King, The triumphs of His grace."

Verse 4: "For you make me glad by your deeds, O Lord; I sing for joy at the works of your hands."

In verse 4 the Psalmist now moves on with the reason why it is good to do the 4 things he mentioned back in the first 2 verses. There are 2 reasons: (1) "For you make me glad by your deeds, O Lord" and (2) "I sing for joy at the works of your hands."

In the present "you make me glad by your deeds, O Lord; I sing for joy" because of Your past faithfulness. I am looking forward to singing for joy and getting all excited about the future because what You are going to do.

C.H. Spurgeon said: "There are times when in the contemplation of redeeming love we feel that if we did not sing we must die; silence would be as horrible to us as if we were gagged by inquisitors, or stifled by murderers."

I think a fitting conclusion to our meditation this morning would be to sing a couple of verses of that wonderful hymn, "**O That Will Be Glory**": *"when all my labors and trials are o'er, And I am safe on that beautiful shore, Just to be near the dear Lord I adore, Will thro' the ages be glory for me. Friends will be there I have loved long ago; Joy like a river around me will flow; Yet, just a smile from my Savior,*

I know, Will thro' the ages be glory for me. O that will be glory for me, Glory for me, glory for me; When by His grace I shall look on His face, That will be glory, be glory for me."

June 20 — Great Are Your Works (Ps. 92:5-6)

Psalm 92:5: *"How great are your works, O Lord, how profound your thoughts!"*

Psalm 92:6: *"The senseless man does not know, fools do not understand,"*

Verse 5: "How great are your works, O Lord, how profound your thoughts!"

In verse 5 the Psalmist focuses on 2 things for which he is praising the Lord: (1) "How great are your works, O Lord" and (2) "how profound your thoughts!"

Lord, You are awesome! You are amazing!

Alexander says: *"How great are thy doings, Jehovah, (how) exceedingly deep thy thoughts!"*

Thoughts and doings are correlative expressions, signifying plan and execution. *Deep*, not mysterious, but vast, immense, and inexhaustible, corresponding to *great* in the other clause."

C.H. Spurgeon said: "He is lost in wonder. He utters an exclamation of amazement. How vast! How stupendous are the doings of Jehovah!"

Wyrzten says: "I want my life to be captivated by His greatness and grandeur. What cause for singing, playing, and dancing!"

The Psalmist exclaims: "how profound your thoughts!"

Romans 11:33-34: "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor?" (NASB).

1 Corinthians 13:12: "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known" (NASB).

Verse 6: "The senseless man does not know, fools do not understand,"

In contrast to the righteous, you have "The senseless man" and the "fools." They are characterized as: (1) "not know[ing]" and (2) "not understand[ing]."

Psalm 14:1: "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good" (NIV).

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).

David Jeremiah says: "A dying W. C. Fields, according to legend, surprised a friend by asking for a Bible. When he asked the comedian what he was doing, Fields replied, 'Looking for loopholes.' And we all do a bit of that when it comes time for truly sacrificial obedience." (*My Heart's Desire*, 67)

Please join me in worshiping the Lord and singing that wonderful hymn **"He Lifted Me"**: *"In loving kindness Jesus came, My soul in mercy to reclaim, And from the depths of sin and shame Thro' grace He lifted me. Now on a higher plane I dwell, And with my soul I know 'tis well; Yet how or why, I cannot tell, He should have lifted me. From sinking sand He lifted me, With tender hand He lifted me, From shades of night to planes of light, O praise His name, He lifted me!"*

June 21 — The Wicked Shall Perish (Ps. 92:7-8)

Psalm 92:7: *"that though the wicked spring up like grass and all evildoers flourish, they will be forever destroyed."*

Psalm 92:8: *"But you, O Lord, are exalted forever."*

Verse 7: "that though the wicked spring up like grass and all evildoers flourish, they will be forever destroyed."

Back in verse 6 we had "The senseless man" and "fools."

Now in verse 7 we have "the wicked" and the "evildoers."

Psalm 37:1-2: "Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong; for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away" (NIV).

In the verses of Psalm 37 the Lord tells us what we need to do. Psalm 37:3-5: “Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this” (NIV).

Psalm 1:4-6: “Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish” (NIV).

Verse 8: “But you, O Lord, are exalted forever.”

Here we have another one of those Blessed But’s. The contrast between the “senseless man,” “fools,” “the wicked,” and “evildoers”: “But you, O Lord, are exalted forever.”

Lord, You are the eternal One. This verse happens to be the center verse of the Psalm. We had 7 verses before. We will now have 7 more following this verse. This is the key thought to the whole Psalm: “you, O Lord, are exalted forever.” It’s all about the Lord! We need to get off the throne of our lives and resign control and turn it all over to Him.

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).

What joy and confidence wells up in our hearts when we realize in the winter of our lives, there is a faithful God who is reigning forever.

2 Peter 3:9: “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).

I think it would be good for us this morning to conclude our meditation on the destiny of the wicked to sing that song **“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.”*

June 22 — The Victory is the Lord’s (Ps. 92:9-11)

Psalm 92:9: “For surely your enemies, O Lord, surely your enemies will perish; all evildoers will be scattered.”

Psalm 92:10: “You have exalted my horn like that of a wild ox; fine oils have been poured upon me.”

Psalm 92:11: “My eyes have seen the defeat of my adversaries; my ears have heard the rout of my wicked foes.”

Verse 9: “For surely your enemies, O Lord, surely your enemies will perish; all evildoers will be scattered.”

Here in verse 9 we now have the reason for the glorious outburst in verse 8, “You, O Lord, are exalted forever.”

The reason stated here in verse 9 is: “For surely your enemies, O Lord, surely your enemies will perish; all evildoers will be scattered.”

Perowne says “scattered” is literally translated: “SHALL MELT AWAY... ‘shall separate themselves, disperse,’ breaking up as it were without the application of any external force.”

Verse 10: “You have exalted my horn like that of a wild ox; fine oils have been poured upon me.”

The word “You” takes us back to verse 8: “But you, O Lord, are exalted forever.” Now in verse 10 we have: “You have exalted my horn like that of a wild ox.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “An animal horn pictures strength...and the ‘oil’ represents festivity and restoration of vitality. So because God is **exalted**...He will likewise bless His people. Moreover, the righteous will see the complete destruction of the **wicked**...” (861)

Spurgeon said: “...I think David meant that he should also *have new cause for delight*. Anointing with oil was intended to give pleasure. The element of joy in religion is looked upon with indifference by

some, but they are unwise. There are some now-a-days who would like to strike out everything from mortal life which gives pleasure.”

Verse 11: “My eyes have seen the defeat of my adversaries; my ears have heard the rout of my wicked foes.”

The reason he speaks with such a positive tone is because what his “eyes have seen” and his “ears have heard.”

“[His] eyes have seen defeat of [his] adversaries; [his] ears have heard the rout of [his] wicked foes.”

It’s like he is going from victory unto victory and the Lord is leading him onward.

A great worship song to sing as we conclude this study is **“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. All of my conflicts, all my thoughts—Jesus is Lord of all. His love wins the battles I could not have fought; Jesus is Lord of all. All of my longings, all my dreams—Jesus is Lord of all. All of my failures His power redeems; 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.”*

June 23 — The Righteous Shall Flourish (Ps. 92:12-13)

Psalm 92:12: *“The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;”*

Psalm 92:13: *“planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God.”*

Verse 12: “The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “The wicked may flourish but like grass their prosperity is short-lived. . . On the other hand **the righteous will flourish like...palm trees and cedars of Lebanon**. These trees picture fruitfulness and vitality...under God’s good hand...Those who are so blessed will proclaim the righteousness of **the LORD**, their **Rock**...”

The opening statement of verse 12 is “The righteous will flourish.”

When we think of the word “flourish” we think of prosperous, thriving, flourishing, booming, successful, rising, doing well, making it, up and coming, zooming to the top, going up in the world, on the make, profiteering, well set-up, established, well-to-do, well-off, well-heeled, rolling in it, affluent, comfortable, comfortably off, set for life. moneyed, living high off the hog, riding on the crest of a wave, buoyant, bullish.

Don Wyrzten says: “Can you imagine ‘winter without Christmas?’ Yet that’s exactly how C. S. Lewis described the state of the unsaved. The enemies of God have nothing to look forward to!”

John MacArthur says: “Spiritual growth progresses from knowing you are a Christian to knowing the Word of God to knowing God Himself. The way to know God is to spend your life focusing on His glory, thus learning to understand the fullness of His person. That focus becomes a magnet drawing you upward through the levels of maturity.” (*Truth For Today*, 47)

He says further: “You will grow spiritually when you say to God, ‘If Your Word says it, I will believe it; if Your Word promises it, I will claim it; and if Your Word commands it, I will obey it.’” (60)

This truly is the way you flourish!

Winston Churchill said: “The great thing is to get the true picture, whatever it is.”

God is always in the business of blessing the obedient heart.

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).

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).

Verse 13: “planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God.”

Back in verse 12 we learned “The righteous will flourish like a palm tree.” Now here in verse 13: “they will flourish in the courts of our God.”

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

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

1 Chronicles 29:12: "Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all" (NIV).

I have chosen a great hymn for us to conclude our time of worship this morning. It fits so well what we have just been reading. **"Jesus Is the Joy of Living":** *"I have found a wondrous Savior, Jesus Christ, The Soul's Delight; Ev'ry blessing of His favor Fills my heart with hope so bright. Heav'nly wisdom He provides me, Grace to keep my spirit free; In His own sweet way He guides me When the path I cannot see. Jesus is the Joy of Living, He's the King of Life to me; Unto Him my all I'm giving, His forevermore to be. I will do what He commands me, Anywhere He leads I'll go; (I'll go;) Jesus is the joy of living. He's dearest friend I know."*

June 24 — Bearing Fruit in Old Age (Ps. 92:14-15)

Psalm 92:14: *"They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green,"*

Psalm 92:15: *"proclaiming, 'The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him.'"*

Verse 14: *"They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green,"*

Back in the 70's when I was running marathons, one of my heroes was Walter Stack. He was 85-years-old and was still running marathons. He did most of his training in northern California around the Golden Gate Bridge. One of the sports writers asked him "Don't your teeth chatter on those cold mornings?" He said, "Naw! I just leave them in my locker!"

C.H. Spurgeon said: "Aged believers possess a ripe experience, and by their mellow tempers and sweet testimonies they feed many. Even if bedridden, they bear the fruit of patience; if poor and obscure, their lowly and contented spirit becomes the admiration of those who know how to appreciate modest worth."

Perowne says: "THEY SHALL BEAR FRUIT, in allusion probably to the great fruitfulness of the date-palm, which, when it reaches maturity, produces three or four hundred pounds' weight of fruit, and has been known even to produce six hundred pounds' weight."

Jesus said after they left the upper room and were going down to the Garden of Gethsemane: "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples" (John 15:8 NIV).

D.L. Moody said: "It does not pay to get sour as you get old. I pity a man who lives in the past. He lives on stale manna. He gets stunted."

Wiersbe says: *"God wants you to grow like strong, productive trees that bear much fruit. He wants your roots to grow deep to draw nourishment from His hidden spiritual resources. Are you planted and feeding on the Word of God daily? Are you producing fruit and bringing glory to Him? Are you flourishing and feeding others?"*

Jeremiah 17:7-8: "But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit" (NIV).

Verse 15: *"proclaiming, 'The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him.'"*

These who "still bear fruit in old age" have a 3-point testimony: (1) "The Lord is upright"; (2) "he is my Rock"; and (3) "there is no wickedness in him." Yes, He is everything to me!

Vernon Ground says: "What about your own life? Is it spiritually dried up? Ask Jesus, the fountain of living water (John 7:37), to fill you with His presence. Then joy and peace will begin to bubble up and even overflow."

Bonar says: "I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'Behold, I freely give the living water, Thirsty one, stoop down And drink and live.'"

Jeremiah 31:25: "I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint" (NIV).

Wyrzten prays: “O Lord, Most High, You are exalted forever. I confess my utter dependence and vulnerability before You. Satisfy my thirst for You today.”

In Mark 1:41 we read these words: “Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man...” (NIV).

Let’s bear testimony today that through our moments of meditation, **“He Touched Me”**: *“Shackled by a heavy burden, ‘Neath a load of guilt and shame—Then the hand of Jesus touched me, And now I am no longer the same. Since I met this blessed Savior, Since He cleansed and made me whole, I will never cease to praise Him—I’ll shout it while eternity rolls. He touched me, O He touched me, And O the joy that floods my soul! Something happened, and now I know, He touched me and made me whole.”*

June 25 — Shout Aloud to the Rock! (Ps. 95:1)

Psalm 95:1: “Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.”

J. Vernon McGee says: “Psalm 95 is just a delightful hymn of praise.”

James Boice says: “Psalm 95 tells us how to worship. Indeed, it does more. It is a call to worship; it explains how and why we should worship; and it warns of what can happen if we do not worship but harden our hearts instead.”

Come, let’s respond to the invitation in verse 1.

Verse 1: “Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.”

The words “let us” appears 2 times here in verse 1: (1) “let us sing for joy to the Lord” and (2) “let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.”

The key phrases are: (1) “sing for joy” and (2) “shout aloud.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “[The Lord] is designated here as the Rock of our salvation, a figure of God’s provision of security by delivering His people.” (862)

Phillips says: “What a wonderful name for God! ‘The rock of our salvation.’ Such is His fame! Well might we sing:

Oh safe to the Rock that is higher than I,
My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly;
So sinful, so weary, Thine, Thine would I be:
Thou blest ‘Rock of Ages’ I’m hiding in Thee.”

Psalm 62:1-2: “My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken” (NIV).

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).

Leslie Brandt paraphrases these opening verses: “Let us begin this day with singing. Whether we feel like it or not, let us make glad sounds and force our tongues to articulate words of thanksgiving and praise.”

Psalm 147:1: “Praise the Lord. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him!” (NIV).

Amy Carmichael says: “If only all who love our dear Lord are ready to answer the call, ‘O come, let us adore Him,’ then there will be pure worship, pure adoration.” (*Whispers of His Power*, 57)

Jack Hayford says: “As you ask the Lord to teach you more and more about the tireless, ongoing spirit of praise, it will change your circumstances, and it will change you!” (*Praise in the Presence of God*, 38)

Luke 15:10 says: “...there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (NIV).

Let’s conclude our worship today by singing joyfully that wonderful hymn **“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. Ring the bells of heaven—spread the feast today! Angels, swell the glad triumphant strain! Tell the joyful tidings; bear them far*

away, *For a precious soul is born again. 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.*"

June 26 — Come, You Thankful People, Come! (Ps. 95:2)

Psalm 95:2: *"Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song."*

Verse 2: "Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song."

Doesn't the verse this morning remind you of Thanksgiving time? And how we, during that special celebration, will sing "Come, Ye Thankful People": "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."

Thanksgiving is something is scheduled once a year. To be obedient believers, we say thanks on that day and every day.

Thanksgiving is to be a way of life.

1 Thessalonians 5:18: "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (NASB).

You will remember the experience in the life of the Lord Jesus when He healed the 10 lepers and only one returned to say thank you. Jesus asked, "Where are the 9?"

"Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song."

Peterson paraphrases verse 2: "Let's march into his presence singing praises, lifting the rafters with our hymns!"

In verse 1 we had: (1) "let us sing for joy to the Lord" and (2) "let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation."

Now in verse 2 we have: (3) "Let us come before him with thanksgiving" and (4) "Let us...extol him with music and song."

Whereas the words "sing for joy" and "shout aloud" were the key words in verse 1, the key words here in verse 2 are "come before him." We are to "come before him with": (1) "thanksgiving"; (2) "music"; and (3) "song."

Henry Blackaby says: "Praise is rooted not in circumstances of the moment but in the nature and trustworthiness of God." (*Experiencing God Day-By-Day*, 90)

Jack Hayford says: "Sing happily, rejoice openly, cry humbly, shout triumphantly, praise unreservedly. Let us come before His throne with a full sense of His worthiness and a judicious sense of our happy privilege to be invited." (*Praise in the Presence of God*, 31)

Kay Arthur says: "It is crucial to understand, however, that the command to rejoice does not mean rejoicing in your circumstances; it means rejoicing in your Savior, who is Lord over every circumstance of life." (*Search My Heart, O God*, 55)

I have chosen for our concluding hymn of worship **"All That Thrills My Soul"**: *"Who can cheer the heart like Jesus, By His presence all divine? True and tender, pure and precious, Oh, how blest to call Him mine! Love of Christ so freely given, Grace of God beyond degree, Mercy higher than the heaven Deeper than the deepest sea. All that thrills my soul is Jesus; he is more than life to me; And the fairest of ten thousand, In my blessed Lord I see."*

June 27 — The Lord is the Great God (Ps. 95:3-4)

Psalm 95:3: *"For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods."*

Psalm 95:4: *"In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him."*

Verse 3: "For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods."

In verse 3 we now have the reason why we have been invited to: (1) "sing for joy to the Lord"; (2) "[to] shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation"; (3) "come before him with thanksgiving"; and (4) "extol him with music and song."

The reason is 2-fold. "The Lord is": (1) "the great God" and (2) "the great King above all gods."

Allen says: "To praise the name of God is to say with integrity something right about God. When we say that 'God is good,' we are praising His name. Similarly, the following are a few examples of genuine statements of praise about the living Yahweh:

The Lord is great!
His majesty is resplendent!
He has been so good to me!
God never changes!
Jesus is my Savior!"

David Jeremiah says: "Don't ever forget that the one constant in all of life is God's presence with you, and for that He deserves to be praised." (*Sanctuary*, 10)

Verse 4: "In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him."

There are 2 things being said here: (1) "In his hand are the depths of the earth" and (2) "the mountain peaks belong to him."

The reason "the depths of the earth" are in his hand and "the mountain peaks belong to him" is understood by the fact He is the one who made them.

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).

Isaiah 40:22: "He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in" (NIV).

Isaiah 40:25-26: "'To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?' says the Holy One. Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing" (NIV).

One of the great hymns of the church is one that is not sung very often but has a powerful message. I think it is appropriate for us to conclude our worship today by singing "**Channels Only**":
"How I praise Thee, precious Saviour, That Thy love laid hold of me; Thou hast saved and cleansed and filled me That I might Thy channel be. Emptied that Thou shouldest fill me, A clean vessel in Thy hand; With no pow'r but as Thou givest Graciously with each command. Channels only, blessed Master, But with all Thy wondrous pow'r Flowing thro' us, Thou canst use us Ev'ry day and ev'ry hour."

June 28 — Let Us Bow Down in Worship (Ps. 95:5-6)

Psalms 95:5: "The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land."

Psalms 95:6: "Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;"

Verse 5: "The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land."

"The sea is his" and the reason is "he made it."

"His hands formed the dry land."

There are 4 things we observe here in these verses about creation: (1) "[In] his hands" are "the depths of the earth"; (2) "the mountain peaks belong to him"; (3) "The sea is his"; and (4) "his hands formed the dry land."

The reason all of this belongs to Him is because He is the creator. He is the One who made all these things: (1) "the depths of the earth"; (2) "the mountain peaks"; (3) "the sea"; and (4) "the dry land."

This verse reminds me of 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 own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (NASB).

Verse 6: "Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;"

We have been contemplating the fact He is the God of creation. He is the God of the: "depths of the earth," "the mountain peaks," "the sea," and "the dry land."

I find myself wanting to stop and sing that wonderful hymn "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! When thru the woods and forest glades I wander And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees, When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur

And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze, Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee;...How great Thou art!"

Now we are challenged in verse 6 to do 2 things: (1) "let us bow down in worship" and (2) "let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." We are challenged to "bow down" and "kneel." These are positions of submission and surrender to the Sovereign God.

Let's put these 5 statements together and understand what the Psalmist is telling us to do as acts of worship in this Psalm: (1) "let us sing for joy to the Lord"; (2) "let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation"; (3) "Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song"; (4) "let us bow down in worship"; and (5) "let us kneel before the Lord our maker."

Warren Wiersbe says: "The greatness of God is the answer to the smallness of man. When you see great sin and great disappointment or when you have a great burden to carry, remember that you are worshipping a great God. As you kneel before Him, He becomes even greater."

I think it appropriate we sing a hymn of worship, praise and adoration. I have chosen to sing verses 1 and 4 of **"He Is So Precious to Me"**: *"So precious is Jesus, my Saviour, my King, His praise all the day long with rapture I sing; To Him in my weakness for strength I can cling, For He is so precious to me. I praise Him because He appointed a place Where, some day, thro' faith in His wonderful grace, I know I shall see Him, shall look on His face, For He is so precious to me. For He is so precious to me, For He is so precious to me; 'Tis Heaven below My Redeemer to know, For He is so precious to me."*

June 29 — The Flock Under His Care (Ps. 95:7-8)

Psalm 95:7: *"for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if you hear his voice,"*

Psalm 95:8: *"do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert,"*

Verse 7: "for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if you hear his voice,"

Once again we have a reason why we are to "bow down" and "kneel": (1) "he is our God"; (2) "the Lord [is] our Maker"; and now (3) "he is our God."

"We are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care."

There are 3 things said here: (1) "he is our God"; (2) "we are the people of his pasture"; and (3) "the flock under his care."

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).

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).

John 10:11: "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep" (NASB).

John 10:27: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (NASB).

Psalm 23:1: "The Lord is my shepherd, [I shall lack nothing.] He makes me lie down in green pastures" (NIV).

The result of all this care and personal attention by our Lord should cause us to be: (1) filled with praise and (2) be at peace. All of this personal concern is an incredible act of grace.

The remainder of verse 7 is the beginning of a warning that carries through to the end of the Psalm. It is an emphatic warning: "Today, if you hear his voice."

Whereas in the earlier verses we had grace, now in these remaining verses we have judgment.

Plumer says: "To hear his voice is to obey him and follow him."

Wyrzten prays: "O Great King and Gentle Shepherd, I can scarcely believe that You who created the world desire fellowship with one of Your lowly sheep. Praise your Name forever!"

Verse 8: *"do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert,"*

We now have a negative command—a warning: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”

The Psalmist points out 2 critical times in their history when they did “harden [their] hearts”: (1) “as you did at Meribah” and (2) “as you did that day at Massah in the desert.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “The incident referred to here is the people’s murmuring at Rephidim... The names given to the place reflect the incident. Meribah... means ‘strife’ and Massah means ‘testing,’ for the people strove with the Lord and tested Him. So God swore that they would not enter the land, but must perish in the wilderness.” (863)

Can you see how much they missed with their hardened, ungrateful hearts?

Wiersbe asks the question: How do we harden our hearts? It’s a process that occurs gradually as we complain about God’s work and ignore His Word.”

Tim LeHaye says: “The bottom line to spirituality will be heart-centered. Who controls your heart? Who uses your body? That’s what this life is about. Who controls you—God or Satan? A truly spiritual person dedicates his life to God for whatever use the heavenly Father wishes. In this way he allows God to make him a ‘living sacrifice’ or a living vessel of service...” (*Seduction of the Heart*, 207)

I’ve chosen a prayer-hymn this morning to conclude our time of worship. Join me in singing **“Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us”**: *“Saviour, like a shepherd lead us, Much we need Thy tender care; In Thy pleasant pastures feed us, For our use Thy folds prepare: Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus, Thou hast bought us, Thine we are; Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus, Thou hast bought us, Thine we are. Early let us seek Thy favor; Early let us do Thy will; Blessed Lord and only Saviour, With Thy love our bosoms fill: Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus, Thou hast loved us, love us still; Blessed Jesus, Blessed Jesus, Thou hast loved us, love us still.”*

June 30 — Wandering in the Wilderness (Ps. 95:9-11)

Psalm 95:9: “where your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did.”

Psalm 95:10: “For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, ‘They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways.’”

Psalm 95:11: “So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’”

Verse 9: “where your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did.”

It was “in the desert, where your fathers” did 2 things: (1) “[they] tested and tried me” even though (2) “they had seen what I did.”

Their ears were dulled and their hearts were hard. As a result, in verse 9, the Lord evaluated the situation by saying “your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did.” They didn’t listen and they didn’t obey.

Verse 10: “For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, ‘They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways.’”

There are 2 things here in verse 10 that make the Lord angry: (1) “They are a people whose hearts go astray” and (2) “they have not known my ways.”

Isaiah 53:6: “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (NIV).

Luke 15:16-17: “And he was longing to fill his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him. But when he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger!’” (NASB).

Amy Carmichael says: “There is a wonderful sense of release when we understand that we need never plan for ourselves, never try to twist circumstances so that our wishes shall come to pass. We have only one thing to do, such a happy, peaceful thing that we can never be glad enough and grateful enough for it. We have only to commit ourselves and our ways to Him who guides us by the skillfulness of His Hands.” (*Whispers of His Power*, 136)

Lord, the prayer of my heart personally as I read of Your response to the Israelites is: “Lord, make me sensitive to Your Spirit, to allow You to have total and complete control in the leadership and direction of my life.”

Verse 11: “So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’”

Here we have the result of the actions in the previous verses. The Lord says: “So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’” They were a people with “hardened...hearts” and “hearts [that] go astray.” As a result, “they have not known [His] ways.”

The justifiable response on the part of the Lord is stated here in verse 11: “I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “The warning in Psalm 95 anticipates this because it is part of a song that celebrates the Lord’s kingship...a kingship that can only be served by true worshipers.” (863)

Wyrzten says: “Unbelief and resistance cost the children of Israel their promised rest in the land flowing with milk and honey. Will I be faithful to the end? Will my performance disintegrate, or will I reach the finale?”

Joseph Stowell says: “Surrendering fully to Jesus is the key to beginning a life that effectively impacts your world for Him.” (*The Trouble With Jesus*, 154)

Michelle McKinney Hammond says: “Many of us miss life’s payday by quitting in the middle of the job.” (*Get Over It and On With It!*, 136)

Lord, thank You for the precious promises that are ours from the lips of Jesus in 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).

Lord, the response of my heart on this occasion is verbalized in Psalm 45:6: “Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom” (NIV).

Wyrzten prays: “O Great God King, soften my heart toward You and turn my murmurings into a melody of praise.”

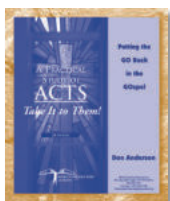
Wiersbe says: “When you take God and His provisions for granted, you become less thankful and less responsive to Him. Heed the warning of these verses: Keep your heart open to God’s Word and obey Him.”

Hudson Taylor loved to sing “Jesus, I am resting, resting, In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness Of Thy loving heart. Thou hast bid me gaze upon Thee, And Thy beauty fills my soul, For by Thy transforming power, Thou hast made me whole.”

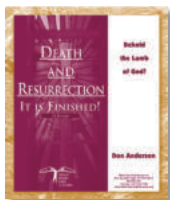
Psalm 118:15: “Songs of joy and victory are sung in the camp of the godly. The strong right arm of the Lord has done glorious things!” (NLT).

Please join me in singing a most significant hymn. In view of the passage we have looked at this morning, let’s sing **“Take Time to Be Holy”**: “*Take time to be holy; Speak oft with thy Lord; Abide in Him always, And feed on His Word. Make friends with God’s children; Help those who are weak, Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek. Take time to be holy; The world rushes on; Spend much time in secret With Jesus alone. By looking to Jesus, Like Him thou shalt be; Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see. Take time to be holy; Let Him be thy Guide; And run not before Him, Whatever betide. In joy or in sorrow, Still follow thy Lord And, looking to Jesus, Still trust in His Word.*”

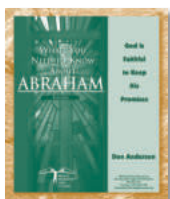
Bible Teaching Resources offers excellent resources to help you better understand and apply timeless truths from Scripture.



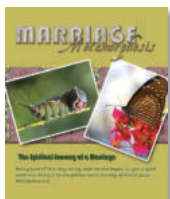
BOOKS OF THE BIBLE—In this series, verse-by-verse studies tackle difficult issues and bring unclear verses into focus.



TOPICAL STUDIES—Don's topical studies are solidly based on the timeless truths of Scripture and are designed to instruct, encourage, strengthen, and inform those seeking insight into life's problems.



BIBLICAL BIOGRAPHIES—Discover fascinating life lessons from men and women of the Bible as Don brings biblical characters to life.



MARRIAGE SERIES—These special Marriage Series are for couples who wish to discover the keys to victory over common relationship barriers and create a satisfying and God-honoring marriage.

The Grapevine—We send a free quarterly magazine, *The Grapevine*, with no obligation to anyone requesting to be on our mailing list. Inside, you'll find helpful articles on strengthening the family, spiritual growth, plus photos and updates from our ministry events.

Weekly E-Newsletter—Receive our weekly email with a devotional, Scripture, encouraging quotes, Ministry prayer requests and important announcements. Sign up by emailing dam@bibleteachingresources.org.

www.BibleTeachingResources.org

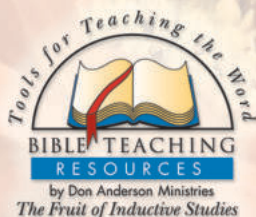
Bible Teaching Resources

Tools for Teaching the Word

Bible Teaching Resources is an independent non-profit organization entirely funded by the gracious gifts of individuals and organizations that have been touched by Bible Teaching Resources and/or wish to touch others through their support. If our work has blessed you, your church, or your organization, we thank you for your generous support and ask for your continued prayers.



To order additional copies of *A Great While Before Day* or for more information, please contact Bible Teaching Resources online, by phone, or write to us.



Bible Teaching Resources

P.O. Box 6611

Tyler, TX 75711-6611

903.939.1201

Toll free: 1.877.326.7729

www.BibleTeachingResources.org

Produced for Bible Teaching Resources, Tyler, TX
Cover layout and design: Fluency Organization, Inc. Tyler, TX.
Managing Editor/Page Layout and Design: Kimberly Denman © 2011

**CELEBRATING
40 Years**

Copyright © 2017 by Bible Teaching Resources by Don Anderson Ministries. The author's publication incorporates quoted, paraphrased and summarized material from a variety of sources, all of which have been appropriately credited to the best of our ability. Quotations particularly reside within the realm of fair use. It is the nature of this publication to contain references that may prove difficult to accurately attribute. Any use of material without proper citation is unintentional.