

God Is A ... or God Is My ...?

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[0:00] We are in Psalms again. And you know, I know we've been in Psalms for a few weeks now. But if you're like me, and maybe you've experienced this, you get into Psalms and you know what?

It's hard to get out of. But there's a good reason for that. The reason it's kind of hard to get out of is there's so many wonderful things. And that's true with all of God's Word. But you get in the book of Psalms and it's just so uplifting.

There's just so many things there that point us to God and point us to the fact that our lives need to be all about praising Him. Recognizing His goodness.

And not just recognizing it, but then doing something about it. Recognizing something and doing something about it are two very different things, aren't they? Wouldn't you agree with that?

I mean, I can go home and I can look at the kitchen counter and I can say, that counter's a mess. It's full of dishes. No, it's never like that.

[1:02] If it were ever like that, I could look at it and say, that counter is a mess. That, I'm getting myself in trouble. That is recognizing something, right?

We all do that. We all recognize things. But when we recognize something, that leaves us with a choice. We have options. Really, in that circumstance, there are two options.

Option number one is really the easiest option. And what is that easiest option? Yep. Recognize that counter's a mess of dishes and then go sit down or do something else.

That is option one. That option does not make my wife happy. Option number two is what? Yell at your wife. Yell at your wife.

No, that is not an option. Not an option. Option number two, realistically, when we recognize a problem, what is the second option? You do something about it. You say, oh, I recognize it.

[2:00] Then I'm going to do something about it. And if I do that, my wife is happy. Now, my wife is not God, but put God in that scenario. We recognize God's goodness and then we have an option.

We can either do something about it and praise Him for that goodness He has shown us, or we can just choose to walk away. To recognize His goodness, but then not do anything about it.

Guess what? God's not happy when we do that. He wants us. He desires that we praise Him. And really, Psalms just shows us that so very clearly. And most of Psalms, not all of it, but a great portion of Psalms was written by David, a man who says that he was after God's own heart.

And the reason for that is David, when he recognized God's goodness, do you know what he did? He made that choice to do something about it. He praised God for it.

He talks about praising God among the congregation. That means in a church setting. But he also said among the heathen. That means when you're out in the world, he chose to praise God. Are we going to choose that same thing?

[3:06] All right. Sorry. Back in Psalms, chapter 18 is where we're going to be this morning. I know we've kind of been towards the end of Psalms. We're going to look a little more towards the beginning. Psalms, chapter 18. And this is a Psalm that was written by David.

And again, David had a lot of ups and downs in his life. He had times he was fleeing for his life, whether it was from King Saul or from his son Absalom. He was at times fleeing for his very life. He had a lot of ups and downs.

Psalms 18. If you found that, if you're able to stand while we read, I would ask if you'd stand while we read God's Word. Psalms 18. And we're going to share the first seven verses to start with.

So I'd encourage you to follow along. Psalms 18. I will love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my strength in whom I will trust, my buckler and the horn of my salvation and my high tower.

I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised. So shall I be saved from my enemies. The sorrows of death compassed me. The floods of the ungodly men made me afraid.

[4:11] The sorrows of hell compassed me about. The snares of death prevented me. In my distress, I called upon the Lord and cried out to my God. He heard my voice out of His temple and my cry came before Him even into His ears.

Then the earth shook and trembled. The foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken because He was angry. Let's bow our heads. Lord God, thank You again for Your Word, for this place, Your house that we can come together as a family.

We thank You for Your presence here among us. We thank You for the ministries that have shared over the last few weeks. We thank You for their work. We thank You for the souls that have been saved through them.

We thank You right now that we can hear from Your Word, that Your voice can speak to each one of us. And I pray, Lord, that You would remind us right now that this message is for me. It's for each one of us.

And I pray, Lord, as a result that we would have our ears open to it, that we would set aside all the busyness, all the activity, all the things that can be on our mind and just help us to focus on Your message right now.

[5:21] Lord, You deserve our focus, so I pray, Lord, we give it to You on this day. And it's in the name of Jesus Christ that we pray and all God's family said, Amen. All right, you can be seated. You know, there's so many things I like about the book of Psalms and this chapter in particular.

And I like the way, again, each psalm was a song originally that was sung in praise to God. But I like the way this one in particular, the way it starts. Because it starts with two very simple words that really aren't that hard to understand, but there's a lot of meaning in them.

What is the first two words that it starts with? I will. What is significant about just those two words? I will. It's a positive attitude.

What else? Annabelle? You're going to purposely do it? It's an action item.

There is so much contained in just those two words, I will. It is, you know, the word that I think of and everything that was mentioned is true, but the one word I think of when I hear I will, I think of a commitment that is being made.

[6:32] And maybe the reason that I think of that, I have the opportunity over the years to do many, many weddings. I don't know how many weddings I've done at this point. And when I start a wedding as a bride and groom come forward, one of the first things I ask is, why are you here today?

Have you come to take this guy to be your husband? Have you come to take this girl to be your wife? If so, answer, I will. You know, and their response is, I will. What is that?

It's a commitment that's being made that I will honor, I will trust, I will commit my life to this person. And David is starting this psalm with a commitment.

I will. And here's the thing, I hope that that's an example to each one of us. And both those words in that are equally important. The first word, I, what is so important about that I word?

I will. I will. It's individual and it's personal. It's saying I. It's saying I can't speak for anybody else except for me.

[7:35] I can't speak for my wife. I can't speak for my brothers here this morning, my parents. I can't speak for you, my friends, my family. I can't speak for any of you. I can encourage you, but the only one I can speak for is myself.

But each one of us has to have that same thought that this is a personal thing. Our relationship with God, our commitment to God is a very personal thing.

And it starts with, have you made that commitment? I will. And what is he committing to do? I will love you, O Lord. How important is that?

To say, I will. I make a commitment to love my God. And it is, again, it's personal. David is saying, I will do this.

I will love you. In any relationship, how important is it to tell the other person you love them? We understand in a marriage relationship, that's important, isn't it?

[8:43] We understand as we raise children, how important is it that you tell them you love them? It's vital. For our parents, how good does it feel to have your child say, I love you?

It's vital. And it needs to be voiced. It's terrible when somebody makes a comment, well, they know I love them. I don't need to say it, they know it.

No, you need to say it. It needs to come out of your mouth. And really, the question that came on my mind this week, really for myself, and I'll pose it to you too. When's the last time you just told God, I love you?

We know we should do it to our spouse every day. We know we should do it to our children every day. Do we just tell God every day, I love you? We need to. How important do you think that is to tell God, I love you?

And we love God because what? What does the Bible say? Because He first loved us. He loved us first. We're saying it back to Him. God has already said, I love you. God has already told us that.

[9:49] Over and over in the Word, He tells us that. The actions He's done in our lives prove that. God loved us enough, we're going to celebrate Easter for long, Him sending His Son for God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son.

God has already said to you, I love you. If someone in your life, I'm not talking about God right now, if somebody in your life says, I love you, or you say to them, you tell them, I love you, and they don't respond, slap them.

You might want to. How does that feel when they don't respond? I love you, and their response, okay. Hurts your feelings?

Makes you feel bad. Why? Why would that make you feel bad? It's a type of rejection. That love isn't being returned. That is never a good feeling.

How often do you think God has that when He has said all these ways, I love you, and we're not responding. We need to be telling God, I love you.

[10:57] And that's what David is saying. I will love you, oh Lord. I will. Not just now. Tomorrow, I'm going to love you. The day after that, I'm going to love you. The day after that, I'm going to love you. That's not going to change. The circumstances in my life might change.

It might be great today, tough tomorrow, tougher the next day. I don't know what it's going to bring, but through that all, I'm going to continue to love you, Lord. That's the commitment. Same as a marriage commitment.

For better or worse. We know the commitment. That's what God expects. The good, the bad, whatever we're going through that we're going to say, I love you, Lord. And we've talked about this being a personal thing.

And this whole chapter, you get into verse 2 of this chapter, and it reinforces how personal this is. There is one word that's used in not just verse 2, but it's used a lot in verse 6 as well.

It's a two-letter word. I'm going to give you a minute to find it. What do you think that word is? We'll just look at verse 2 right now. What do you think the two-letter word that is so important in these verses is?

[12:02] My. My. My. My. Why is that important? Again, it's personal. Look at verse 2. The Lord that He loves, the Lord is my rock.

The Lord is my fortress, my deliverer, my God, my strength, in whom I will trust. Again, there's that I will. My buckler, the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

David isn't just saying these are things that God is. David is saying these are things that God is to me. Again, that personal part of it.

It doesn't matter who God is to the person sitting next to you. It doesn't matter who God is to your spouse, who God is to your children, who God is to your parent. When your time on this earth comes to an end or Jesus Christ returns, one of those two things.

I was talking already with somebody about this this morning. One of those two things is guaranteed. You do realize that, right? You're either going to die or Jesus is going to come back. One of those things are going to happen. When that happens, it will not matter who Jesus was to your parents. [13:12] It will not matter who Jesus was to your spouse or to your children or to your neighbor or to your friend. That won't matter. What is the one thing that will matter? Who Jesus was to you.

Again, that personal thing that needs to be there. And that's what David is saying throughout this. The Lord that I love, that I am going to continue to love, my God that I love, He is, I mean, He's not a question about it.

He is, and look at the list He gives. He's my rock. What does that mean to say that God is my rock? He's solid.

Okay, you could say that and you could say, well, God is a rock. So what is the difference when you say God is my rock? It means you are depending on Him.

You are using Him as your rock. You're not just saying He's a rock. Could Satan say God's a rock? Yeah. Could Satan say God is my rock? No.

[14:19] There's a huge difference between the two. We need to be saying God is my rock, my strength, that source of strength in my life that does not move and does not change.

That's the thing about a rock. And you know, when it says rock, it's not talking about like a little rock that you might pick up. We go on vacation and I'm not a big go in a souvenir shop and buy something, but I am big at one thing.

My family knows what it is. What am I big at? I get a rock from wherever we go. I've got them from 10 feet down in a lake. I've got them from mountains anywhere we go.

Most of the time I hope it's legal, but I get a rock. But usually they're ones I can carry. Sometimes all I can do to carry, but I get a rock. When it says rock here, that's not the rock it's talking about.

What do you think the rock is it is talking about? Because that rock moves. I can take it from wherever we're on vacation. I can bring it home and it's in my backyard. What is the kind of rock it's talking about? A solid rock.

[15:23] A foundation that will not move. We're talking and I know Paulding County defines, we have a hard time with this. We're talking about a rock that's a mountain. That's what we're talking about.

One that is not going to move. And David was saying God is my rock. He is that thing in my life that is the constant. How many constants do you have in life?

Really, think about it. How many things are constant in your life? There are good things but they're not constant things. We can say our spouse.

Well, that's constant until one of you passes away. You can say your children. You can say your parent. You can say whoever. Those things are all temporary. You can say your job. That's temporary.

You can say your finances. Those are temporary. Your home, that can be temporary. Your car, all these things are temporary. They're not constant. David is saying the Lord is my rock. He is that constant in all the ups and downs of life.

[16:19] God is my rock. After my rock, what does He say? And my fortress. That's equally important too because just as a rock it's just something there.

You can hang on to it. What's the difference between that and a fortress? Think for a minute.

What's the difference between a rock and a fortress? A fortress is protection. You can go inside a fortress, right?

It's something you can go in and be protected. That's what God wants. That we live in Him, abide in Him, that we understand that He can protect us from the things that the world will throw at us. He is my fortress, my deliverer.

What does God deliver us from? Okay, somebody said the biggest. Sin. If you have Jesus Christ in your heart, God is your deliverer because He has delivered you from sin, but what else can He deliver you from?

So many things. So what are those so many things? Death. He delivers us from death, from temptation, from evil, from hopelessness, from despair, from anger.

[17:23] God can deliver us from all these things, from hatred, from bitterness, from envy. God can deliver us from all that. Has He delivered you is the question. Is He your deliverer?

My deliverer, my God, my strength, we've already kind of covered my strength in whom I will trust, my buckler. Now there's one that, at least if you have the King James, yeah, my buckler, what does that mean?

It's not talking about a belt buckle. What's a buckler? It's a shield. And you think, well, why didn't they use the word shield? Well, in history, there have been a lot of different kinds of shields. A buckler is one that you hold in your hand. It's a relatively smaller shield that you can move around and it deflects whatever is coming your way. David is saying, that's what God does for me. He is my buckler, the one who protects me from everything. How many things does the world throw at you? How many things does life throw at you?

[18:24] How many circumstances have you been in in your life that you found that you really wish you weren't in, but you're in it anyway because that's what life brought your way? God is your buckler.

He is the one that will see you through that. He is the one that will protect you in that. That doesn't mean everything's going to go your way, but that means God is going to protect your heart in the midst of all that.

You know, we go through life and sometimes different, we can go down a couple different paths. Sometimes people, as they go through life and they face difficulties, you know what can happen? They can become more bitter, can't they?

angry. And angry. Do you know it? Don't name names, but do you know anybody that has gone down that path? That in life, they become more bitter, more angry as life throws things at them. And then you think of other people that somehow life throws things at them and yet they just grow in grace. They smile. Their positivity does not diminish.

[19:22] Folks, that's the path we go down if He is our buckler, if He is our shield. And the horn of my salvation, God is our salvation, plain and simple. Salvation means being saved.

It's not hard to understand. And my salvation and my, and I like the last one in verse 2, He is my high tower. Why is it important that He is our high tower?

Why? Someone we can look up to? Why else? He's the only one?

What do you do in a high tower? You ever been in a high tower? How many of you have ever been in a high tower? What tower were you in? Clingman's Dome?

Down in the Smokies? What other towers have you been in? A lighthouse? One in Canada? Watchfire Tower. Okay, what do those all have in common?

[20:24] There is something they all have in common. They may be different structures, different built, some natural, some made made. What do they all have in common? Height. Why is it important they have height?

You can see enemies coming. You can see the lay of the land around you. You have a much clearer view, don't you? You know, I think in my life all the towers we've climbed up in, we've climbed up a lot of, you know, they have these fire towers that they used to use a lot out in the national parks and all that.

We've been up a bunch of them. The same thing they all have in common is you're up high where you have a view. All of a sudden, you see a little more clearly and you understand a little differently. And it says, God is our high tower. He can help us, not that we're going to always understand everything, but we begin to understand that God has a greater plan than anything we can ever come up with.

But David is saying all these things, he's saying, my, my, my, my, this is what God is doing for me. And the simple question that I ask you this morning, are you allowing God to do all those things for you?

[21:27] Not to say that God is a high tower, God is a rock, God is strength, God is a buckler, but can you say, God is my strength, God is my buckler, God is the horn of my salvation.

Is that personal connection there? Because folks, in the end, that's all it boils down to. That personal connection. That being able to say, God, I love you because I have a relationship with you.

And the wonderful thing is when we have that with God, look at what David said he did in verse 6. In my distress, I called upon the Lord and cried to who?

My God. He heard my voice out of his temple and my cry came before him even into his ears. Then, here's the response God gives, the earth shook and trembled.

The foundation of the hills moved and were shaken. God responds, doesn't he? When we have that relationship with God and we cry out to him, God will respond.

[22:40] He'll give us the strength we need. He'll give us the understanding that we need. He'll give us the peace that we need. God will do these things for us, folks. And it's not a, I serve God because what he'll do for me.

But when we have that relationship, there's that connection. And God loves us enough that he will respond. But it all starts with our ability to say to God, I love you.

I love you. And again, so many times we read God's word and it's not, it's not meant to be complicated, folks.

It's meant so that we can understand it. And this morning, it comes down to a simple question. Can you say, and are you saying what David said, I will love you, Lord.

I love you now and I'll love you tomorrow. And I will love you the rest of my life. I don't know the last time you told God that you love him. If it's been a while, you need to start telling him on a regular basis.

[23:46] Maybe you've never invited Christ into your heart. You need to make him your savior. Doesn't matter if you're your parents' savior, your grandparents, your child. Is he your savior? Have you invited him into your heart?

Had your sins forgiven? Is he your salvation? If he's not, invite him into your heart today. It's not hard. It's coming forward and just saying, and you can even do it in your seat. You can say, Lord, come into my heart.

Forgive my sins. I understand that you love me and that's why you sent your son to die for me. I invite you into my heart. I ask you to forgive my sins and I love you for what you've done for me. And because of that, I want to live for you. That's what God wants to hear from every one of us. If you invited him into your heart many years ago, that's great. Guess what? You still need to tell him you love him, right?

You know, in another couple months, Tammy and I will have been married 35 years. And I know for some of you that's not a long time. And boy, it doesn't seem like long. It seems like we just got married. Trying to get my points back.

[24:49] But just because we've been married 35 years doesn't mean I don't need to still tell her I love her. It doesn't matter how long you've been a Christian. If you've been a Christian 50 years, that doesn't mean you don't need to tell God you love him anymore.

You should be doing it more now than you did 50 years ago. As you have a deeper understanding and a deeper connection with him. Excuse me. Tell him you love him.

Every day. Make sure he is your rock, your tower, your salvation, your buckler, all those things David talked about. Make sure he's that personally to you.

That you don't know just about God, but that you know God. Let's pray. Lord God, thank you again for this morning and I thank you for your word. I thank you for the things that it teaches us and the challenges that it gives us.

And Lord, this morning as we look at your word it is a simple thing that David was doing. He's just telling his God that he loved him. Something that I think to David just came natural. And I pray Lord that it becomes natural in our lives as we understand all that you've done for us that it would just be a very natural thing to say, Lord, I love you.

[25:58] Help us to do that regularly. Help us to have that personal relationship with you. And Lord, if there's anybody in here right now that doesn't know you, I pray this morning that they would invite you into their heart. Today is a day of salvation.

There's no better time to do it than right now. But for all of us, Lord, my prayer is that nobody leaves this room without a relationship with you, without having their sins forgiven.

Lord, that is my heart's desire on this day. So just speak to our hearts. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.