

Psalm 124

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[0 : 0 0] Again, that's Psalm 124. A song of a sense of David. If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, let Israel now say, if it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when people rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us up alive.

When their anger was kindled against us, then the flood would have swept us away. The torrent would have gone over us. Then over us would have gone the raging waters. Blessed be the Lord who has not given us as prey to their teeth.

We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers. The snare is broken and we have escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. What an introduction.

Good morning, Christchurch. Good morning. Y'all sound like it's not so good of a morning.

[1 : 1 0] Good morning, Christchurch. Good morning. Good morning. Pray that this don't go up and down. My name is Milton Taylor. I serve here as a co-youth director for youth ministry alongside my brother, Jeremy White.

Salute to you, brother. And a special salute to YG, the youth that's out here. Make some noise if you're out here, you. Y'all be way louder. We'll talk Thursday.

We didn't plan this. We didn't plan this. But as the late, great DMX would say in his voice, here we go again.

I've been given the opportunity to proclaim God's word for you today. And let me rush to say that I recognize my frailty and my need for the Lord, my need for his help.

So with that in mind, let me pray for our time together. Lord, we thank you for this day that we have never seen and will never see again.

[2 : 1 7] But we will give an account for every word and every deed that's done in this body. Lord, we need you. We need to hear from you. Hide me behind the cross.

Father, I thank you for every heart that's seated before me. I pray for a heart that's stony, Lord, that you will remove it and replace it with a heart of flesh that you may penetrate it with your word. Help me to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So help me, God. In Jesus' name. Amen. This morning, we continue our listening session of the album entitled Psalm of Ascent.

Not sure if you heard it in this entirety, but it's a pretty dope album. From a distance, it looked like it could have been put together from one of the artists of our day.

On it is 15 tracks. Psalms 120 through 134. There's a few features on it. There's a few writers that contributed to it.

[3 : 2 4] But let me say to you, as it was said to me by my grandfather, he said, Hey, grandson, they just don't make music the way they used to. And if you're smart like I was at that time, I just agreed.

I figured he knew something that I didn't know. But today, we'll be listening to track five, Psalms 124. And as we begin to listen this morning, I want you to think of a time in your life when you was completely dependent on God.

A time where if the Lord did not come through, it would have been over for you. For me, I think back as early as this morning, I don't remember much because I was asleep.

But I do remember that before I went to sleep, I was completely dependent on the Lord to wake me up the next morning. It's that simple.

If the Lord had not woke me up this morning, for me, it would have been over. And I want to expand our minds just a little bit because I think it's easy to point to the times of crisis as times when we are especially dependent on the Lord.

[4 : 42] But the truth of the matter is, we are all completely dependent on the Lord all the time. We need the Lord. We need Jesus Christ.

We need him every day. We need him for all things. If I could sum this text up in one sentence, it would read, If the Lord had given us up, here's how bad it would be.

But praise the Lord, he has not given us up. I want to title this fifth chart on the album, Helps in the Name of the Lord.

Helps in the Name of the Lord. I know it's not that creative, but it is the aspire word of God. I stole it from verse eight. So there you have it.

Allow me to convey this passage to you in two different ways. My first point, what would have been without the Lord? We'll see this in verses two through five.

[5 : 44] What is, second point, what it is with the Lord? We'll see this in verses six through seven. I want to argue from this text that the Lord is our help in death and life.

We won't fight with it. I'll give you the argument again. The Lord is our help in death and life.

So let's press play and listen to the first five verses of this song. If it had not been for the Lord who was on our side, let Israel say, if it had not been for the Lord that was on our side, when people rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us up alive.

When their anger was kindled up against us, then the flood would have swept us away. The torrent would have gone over us and then over us would have gone the raging water.

I love here in the opening song, how the writer encourages all of Israel to affirm the difference God makes. And the key word here in this verse, in these verses is if.

[7 : 04] If is this tiny little word with big implications. And here, if it's focused on what would have happened or what would have been without the Lord.

If the Lord had not been on our side, then we would have been destroyed. Notice how the phrase is repeated. If the Lord had not been on our side. Of course, right away, we say this is for emphasis, right?

And it's true. But also it's because the second time is spoken as an affirmation. First, the psalmist sings it himself. Then he encourages Israel to repeat it in the affirmation of truth.

Also notice how the psalmist uses this flood image. To now show that what would have been without the Lord. Look at verse 2b.

When people rose up against us. Rose is important here because it's letting us know that there's this escalation that's taking place.

[8 : 10] Imagine someone lying down, then stooping, then sitting to the point that he's or she is rising. Right? There's this process, this elevation. In order for something to rise, it has to start at a low place.

So for them, this death that would have been without the Lord was an escalating death. It continues. They would have swallowed us up alive.

When their anger was kindled against us, then the flood would have swept us away. The torment would have gone over us. And over us would have gone the raging water.

Though this is a rising death, this is no slow rising water that causes water damages in your home. This is a flash flood.

This is a tsunami. Where the rushing water swallows you alive. Sweeping you and everything in your path away.

[9 : 08] I remember when I was, I had to be about 10 or 11 years old, fifth or sixth grade. Every other summer, we would go to Atlanta to visit my grandmother and my grandfather.

And my brother and I, we loved to swim. And in order to do what it was we loved, we would sneak into the Marriott. Don't judge me. Don't do that.

Don't do that. I see you. We would sneak into the Marriott in order to do what it was we loved. And even though I loved the water, at this time, I couldn't really swim.

So on a normal day, as we wanted to swim, we snuck into the Marriott. And the plan was to teach me how to swim. I can't explain how excited I was.

We all had agreed that we all would jump in the deep end together. My brother, myself, and my friend, Quad. Now, mind you, they had this conversation on the side that I knew nothing about.

[10 : 10] And so we're at the gate and we're rocking and we're counting. One, two, three.

And we took off and I ran, jumped. Now, I'm in this, my knees are tucked. I'm in cannonball formation. I plan to make the biggest splash College Park Georgia has ever seen.

I land in the water. I don't know if it was the biggest splash, but one thing I do know is that you all wasn't there. So it was the biggest splash College Park Georgia has ever seen.

I noticed, though, that I only heard one splash. And that splash was mine. These brothers didn't jump in. And once I noticed that, I immediately began to die.

I'm in the water, waving my arms, kicking my feet. I'm panicking. I was swept away. The waters begin to rage over me.

[11 : 14] This is what the psalmist is trying to express. That they would have been swallowed alive. That the torrent would have gone over them. I know some of you are like, wait, wait, what happened?

Did they jump in? Did they save you? Don't leave us hanging. Well, the end didn't go with what I was preaching, so I left it out. But for those of you who are worried, I'm here. I'm here.

They did not jump in. They taught me how to swim from curbside. Kick your feet. Pedal. I learned how to swim there. Scary. Don't do that to your kids. Don't do that. But the image here is flood and water.

But the idea is that people are actually rising up as enemies. Remember this. As soon as we become a Christian, we automatically become a target of Satan.

He works through unseen forces.

[12 : 20] He works through people to dishearten, to divide, to destroy us. And so while we presently are enjoying a status of love, favor, and peace with God, we face great opposition and hatred and rejection from this world.

Jesus was hated and put to death. The apostles were constantly in danger. Paul said it like this. Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. He said we are hunted down but never abandoned by God. Are we getting the picture?

We can have many people on our side and still be ruined. We could have a mother and a father that's for us and still live in defeat and disaster.

We can be very well liked and have friends that want to see us do well and still end up in hell, both literally and figuratively.

[13 : 29] But the one that we must have on our side is the Lord. Only the Lord is capable of defending us against the forces that come against us in this world.

God's people is being told in this text to look back on their history and God's deliverance. God's people is being told in this text to look back on their history and the people that come against us. Don't you remember Israel? Don't you remember Israel? Your escape from the Egyptians when they were pursuing you? God through Moses parted the waters of the Red Sea and you walked through on dry ground.

Don't you remember that after safely walking through the sea, God again through Moses closes the sea and Egyptians drowned? Your enemies was defeated.

Do you not remember God again through Joshua, Moses' successor, after wandering around 40 years in the desert, brought you to and through the Jordan to the promised land and drove out before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Amorites, all the Zites andites that you can even think of if it had not been for the Lord who was on our side.

[14 : 46] Do you remember? Do you remember? Have you forgotten what the Lord has brought you through?

What the Lord has brought us through collectively? If it had not been for the Lord who was on our side. Despite considering the frightful reality of being swallowed up alive.

Drowned by a flood of opposition. Torn by our enemy's teeth. This song is not a discouragement. It's a song of exaltation. It's a song of boastful confidence in the Lord. First, the song ponders what would have been without the Lord.

Then it makes this move towards a great crescendo of praise that God is actually with us. Which brings us to our next point.

[15 : 51] What it is with the Lord. From what might have happened to what did happen. God only or not only delivers us from potential danger, verses 1 through 5.

But he also delivers us from present danger. And that's what we see here in verses 6 through 7. Let's look at it. Bless the Lord who has not given us up as prey to their teeth.

We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the followers. Anytime I hear followers, I think of Paul. The snare is broken and we have escaped.

There's a couple things that teach us about praising God. For his protection and his deliverance in our life. First of all, God protects us when we're in danger.

We see this in verse 6. He has not given us up as prey. Here the psalmist changes from flood imagery to wild animal imagery.

[16:59] And if you remember in verse 3, he already hinted at the wild animal imagery when he made the statement being swallowed alive. But here it becomes very clear with the phrase, has not given us up as prey to their teeth.

The picture here is of a wild animal attacking you, tearing you at your flesh. The psalmist says that God didn't let this happen to them. Saints, life is a spiritual battle.

And Christians are not exempt from this battle. At all. In fact, God actually puts us on the front line of it.

As believers, we must be prepared to experience persecution. We must be ready to suffer for our faith. In verse 3, it talked about anger being kindled up from people.

Well, guess what? People get mad at the church. They do. You're like, what? People will be angry at you because you speak up and stand up for truth.

[18:13] But if you are silent and seated, then that don't concern you. But if you are standing for truth, you are speaking truth, your life is reflective of what God has done in your life, then beware.

You will be opposed. But take heart because God is in and on your side protecting you. He's in your corner. He's on your side.

It won't be easy, but it will be worth it. I said there's a couple of things this verse shows us. The first one was praise God because he protects us when we're in danger.

Secondly, he rescues you. He rescues us when we're trapped. We see it in verse 7.

We have escaped like a bird from the father's snare. The imagery shifts again. This time to a father.

[19:17] We'll just call him a trapper. So in this song, we've seen three images. The flood, the wild animal, and the snare.

And guess what, church? God's people escape them all. That's a place of praise. God's people escapes them all.

Man, I should have named this the great escape. I missed it. I missed it. Notice that they were actually trapped in a snare at one point.

Not that they avoided the snare, but they were trapped and then escaped from it. And here is another showing of utter dependence on the Lord.

Why? Because you just don't get out of a snare on your own. That don't happen. Once you're trapped, you're trapped.

[20:21] Does this sound familiar? It sounds like our depravity. In and of ourselves, we're unable to save ourselves.

Our nature of corruption due to sin. The good news about Psalm 124 is that what might have happened didn't happen.

We might have been trapped in sin for life. That didn't happen. We might have died without Christ and gone to an eternal hell.

That didn't happen. Why didn't it happen? Saints, I'm pretty sure you can finish it. Because the Lord was on and is and will always be on our side.

Do you know how, or you do know, or let me say it like this. Do you know how much we ought to bless the Lord when we read this text?

[21:34] Do you? This is a blessing. Think about it. You know how the relationships between us go, right? You got big brother, little brother, big sister, little sister, husband, wife, father, son, mother, daughter.

It's this saying of protection that before I let anything happen to you, it's going to happen to me first. It's, I love you so much that I'm going to jump in front of the bullet.

I love you so much that if they want to get to you, they got to get through me. And this is the type of protection that we have in the Lord.

The very thing that if it had not been for him, we would have been subdued by actually happening to him.

That's crazy. He protects us to keep us from something not happening. But as protecting us, he actually steps in the way so that it actually happens to him.

[22 : 50] When people rose up against us. Question mark, in case you didn't catch it. Well, people actually rose up against him.

They falsely accused him. They beat him. They crossed him. They crucified our king. Spit on him. Ridiculed him. He was swallowed alive. The anger, their anger wasn't just kindled. He was consumed by their anger against him.

God. God. The son. The son of man experienced all that if it had not been for him, we would have. Just like a bird trapped in a snare. Just like we were trapped in our sin. As was Jesus the Christ.

[23 : 55] Trapped in a grave. But somebody say. That on that third day. He rose from the grave.

Breaking the snare of sin. With all power in his hands. That whatever man, woman, boy, or girl. Believe and turn.

Or repent and turn. Believe and go. Shall not perish. But have everlasting life. This is the protection we have in the Lord.

We deserve a sinner's cross. Or a sinner's life. But he who knew no sin became the sin he did not know for us.

Bless the name of the Lord. As I close. We're thinking.

[24 : 59] What do we do with verse eight? My question is. So who is this? That's on our side. Who is this? Lord. That help comes from.

Look at verse eight. Our help. Is in the name. Of the Lord. Who made heaven. And earth. Let me just say this.

I don't have this written down. But. We're protected. By the creator. We're protected. From the very things. That he created.

He created it. What do we have to fret? We got the real one. We got the right one. On our side. Our help is from the supreme.

I wrote this there. It's from the supreme being. The supreme power. The supreme judge. Our help. Is from the maker. Of heaven.

[25 : 56] And earth. When you trust in God. You're trusting. In the almighty creator. Who is fully. Able to help you.

What a great thought. To start our morning. Our help. Is in the name. Of the Lord. Who made. Heaven.

And earth. Let's pray. Lord. If it had not been for you. Who was on our side.

It would have been over. Lord. So today. We bless. Your name. Because you are. On our side. You are. Our protector. You are.

Our deliverer. You are. The maker. Of heaven. And earth. And our help. Comes from you. And so. We will let. It be known.

[26 : 53] Through this world. In Jesus. Mighty name. I pray. Amen. Amen.