

Blessed Be My Rock

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Preacher: J.D. Edwards

[0 : 00] Trusting it's God's inspired, inerrant, infallible, clear, and sufficient word.! It's God's very own word for you, his people.! But with the crooked you prove yourself shrewd, for you rescue and oppress people, but you humble those with haughty eyes.

Lord, you light my lamp. My God illuminates my darkness. With you I can attack a barricade, and with my God I can leap over a wall. God, his way is perfect.

The word of the Lord is pure. He is a shield to all who take refuge in him. For who is God beside the Lord? And who is a rock? Only our God.

God, he clothes me with strength and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer. He sets me securely on the heights. He trains my hands for war.

My arms can bend a bow of bronze. You have given me the shield of your salvation. Your right hand upholds me, and your humility exalts me. You make a spacious place beneath me for my steps, and my ankles do not give way.

[1 : 28] I pursue my enemies and overtake them. I do not turn back until they are wiped out. I crush them, and they cannot get up. They fall beneath my feet.

You have clothed me with strength and for battle. You subdue my adversaries beneath me. You have made my enemies retreat before me. I annihilate those who hate me.

They cry for help, but there is no one to save them. They cry to the Lord, but he does not answer them. I pulverize them like dust before the wind. I trample them like mud in the streets.

You have freed me from the feuds among the people. You have appointed me the head of nations, a people I had not known serve me. Foreigners submit to me, cringing.

As soon as they hear me, they obey me. Foreigners lose heart and come trembling from their fortifications. The Lord lives. Blessed be my rock. The God of my salvation is exalted.

[2 : 30] God, he grants me vengeance and subdues people unto me. He frees me from my enemies. You exalt me above my adversaries. You rescue me from violent men.

Therefore, I will give thanks to you among the nations, Lord. I will sing praises about your name. He gives great victories to his king. He shows loyalty to his anointed, to David and his descendants forever.

The word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. As you're seated, I encourage you to keep Scripture open in front of you to Psalm 18 as we work through this wonderful song of praise together.

Isaiah 40 tells us that the grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord stands forever. In Luke 1, we hear that no word from God shall be void of power.

Let's pray. Oh, God, you are the living rock, the rock of ages.

[3 : 39] We pray that you will speak to your people by your power. We thank you for how you are the same yesterday, today, and forever. How we can run to you, and how by your gentleness, your humility in Christ, you uphold your people by the power of your Holy Spirit that you've poured out.

Please minister to your people today, Lord. Please equip us according to your purposes we ask. Amen. Amen. Well, as we are here reading this poetry from ancient Israel by the great King David, the military leader and conqueror, many have mentioned to me this morning how there are missiles flying across the sky between Israel and Iran.

the whole world is watching what is going on in that part of the world this made me curious to look up where's the church in both of those nations right now it was 1.5 percent of the population of Iran that are Christians there are Christians there very very small minority then I looked it up for Israel 1.9 percent in Israel are Christians and 75 percent of that less than 2 percent total 75 percent are Arabs living in Israel that are Christians someone mentioned to me how in both of those countries they're still running into the rocks and the bunkers in the caves and behind the mountains to find shelter we can only imagine the terror of being in a a nation with a land war especially nowadays with this technology under that type of oppression the greatest hope possible is for victory in fear for all of us our greatest need is shelter when you're at war your biggest desire is rest in terror with hatred from generations piling on feelings of wanting of revenge and vengeance what we really long for is to be happy at peace and resting again the word in the bible for that feeling is blessed and what both of those countries need and what the Christians in either country can find comfort in is exactly what psalm 18 lifts up for us and this is your comfort and mine today it's your hope in mind that we will be able to pray and I hope with even more conviction in the next moments what David prays in verse 46 would you please look there David cries out to God remember he says this at the end of his ministry at the end of second Samuel calling all the nation all of God's people to declare this together blessed be my rock and that's my encouragement for us today that you will be able to say that blessed be my rock the first movement is this this great rock for God's people it provides a source of shelter for them to enjoy life so life in the shade of the rock life in the shade of the rock would you look at the beginning of psalm 18 look at verse 2

I'm going to come back to this verse several times the first thing I want to point out is he says the Lord is my rock he's letting us know right at the beginning of this psalm here's my theme he says God is my strength my God in whom I trust there is a professor at a university in New Zealand a few decades ago and he noticed many of these images especially in the Old Testament describing God and brought richness to this so I learned this through James Montgomery Boyce quoting this professor the first image is this I want to highlight five today a rock is a source of protection in shade he wrote that in the climate in the Middle East where it's hot and sandy the natural elements are merciless we understand that a little bit better here in the high desert of Colorado if you spend three hours without sunscreen in the elements it's merciless imagine in the Middle East he said that in a period of 12 months there will be spring rains and you'll see this really thin layer of green like a carpet but that's doomed to quickly turn into sand again after it's scorched by the sun and it only lasts about two weeks out of 12 months however if you were to put a boulder there or go to a site that has a same patch of sand that cannot sustain life on the the shady side of that massive boulder an oasis will develop life will flourish up against this rock and travelers can then go and stop and enjoy rest in the shade and be sheltered sheltered from the elements during the hottest hours so I think what we have in verses 25 through 29 is a description of life in that oasis in the shade of the great rock the rock of course is an image of God's kingdom and we get insights into the values of God's kingdom look at verse 25 he first gives us three virtues in a row that are pleasing to God he says with the merciful or faithful literally in the Hebrew it's with those who are kind you will show yourself kind with the blameless literally with a master of flawlessness one who is above reproach we can say God will show himself blameless in verse 26 with the pure literally with one being purified you will show yourself blameless you will show yourself pure those are the three virtues but then there's one displeasing vice verse 26 continues with the devious you will show yourself shrewd this is interesting because the Lord his his attributes correspond to what is good and what men would recognize as good and pleasing because it comes from him but when it comes to a way in which mankind is twisted and fallen is twisted and fallen like being devious or distorted you can't say that of God so he has to pick a more careful word like shrewd and then verse 27 you will save the humble but you will bring down one with haughty looks one who is proud so he's laying out the values of the kingdom of God this is the type of life that will flourish in the shade of the rock and this is the type of attributes that don't fit in this kingdom that God will pluck out like a weed that God will pluck out like a weed and cast onto the scorching sand

Martin Luther had a good comment I thought here he said see how God deals with the perverse man who perverts everything God turns everything for that man into the opposite of what he hoped for there's something intrinsically frustrating about sin sin has no place in the kingdom of God Isaiah 32 verse 2 says behold a king will reign in righteousness and princes will rule with justice now listen to this a man will be as a hiding place from the wind a shelter from the tempest as rivers of water in a dry place as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land there will be an anointed king that will come and live in the shadow of a great rock and he will rule with justice and there will be peace for all those who are gathered into his kingdom he's describing the coming Messiah so to the extent that David hides himself next to God in the shade of the rock he's a type of Christ who will come and fulfill all of these prophecies piled up about the kingdom of God anchored to the rock of God himself the people will thrive under such a king a king who is in submission to and protected by

[12:37] God as his rock now notice what he says in verses 28 and 29 for you will light my lamp the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness this is describing life in the kingdom of God 1 Samuel 21:17 refers to Samuel the prophet as the lamp of Israel what was his job as the prophet the prophet represents God to the people Samuel was the mouthpiece of God he was giving the people God's word and it's a lamp for them to live in and flourish under a lamp is associated with God's word and whose light the people can enjoy life now he describes in verse 29 how much safety he enjoys in this kingdom of God in contrast to the nations all around him he says for by you I can run against a troop a troop may be like a raiding party remember in 1 Samuel how the Philistines had their raiders that would go around in these you know fast mobile chariot driven battalions to destroy and terrorize villages but he says I can run against them or it could also be soldiers forming a barricade it reminds us of 2 Samuel chapter 5 the Jebusites were mocking David they said this mountain fortress this one is impenetrable they mocked David saying the blind and the lame will take care of him they'll ward David off there's no way David can capture this one and God helps David to take this fortress which was called Zion and it became the headquarters then Jerusalem he describes what it was like in verse 29 by my God

I can leap over a wall in verse 30 he says as for God his way is perfect the word of the Lord is proven it's his testimony I trusted God's word and he proved himself he is a shield to all who trust in him that's what life is like in the shade of the rock I'm guessing that depending on what each of us is going through right now we're either enjoying that and we can say yes amen that's my testimony at this moment or maybe some of us need to be called back into the shade of the rock of God's kingdom maybe the Lord and his providence has allowed you to be on the hot sand and feel those elements in your soul a bit and he's saying come back come thrive come enjoy life against my rock with Jesus as your king

Isaiah 26 verse 4 calls us to trust in the Lord forever for the Lord God is a rock of ages what that means is that God's nature is everlasting God's strength has no end enjoy life in the shade of the rock next he moves into military language I want to show you how in battle this rock is proven he just said it God's way is perfect his word is proven let's show let's see now using David's imagery how this rock is proven in war notice back in Psalm chapter 18 verse 2 he says God is my shield and my stronghold let's focus on those two words so we get four more images now of God as a rock the first is God as refuge and strength think of how as the superscription to Psalm 18 says

David was on the run from all the enemies even from Saul the king of Israel but God was his protection he was forced to flee and hide in caves and then he reflects back in verse 31 what we have already seen earlier in this Psalm which is a testimony of God's deliverance but here he's meditating on it a second time in the same Psalm Spurgeon's comment about that was this the second thoughts about God's mercy should be and often are the best so in verse 31 David says for who is God except the Lord and who is a rock except our God it is God who has armed me with strength and it is God who makes my way perfect well you notice how in the verse right before that he says God's way is perfect now he says as I walk in God's way he makes my way perfect my way aligns to God's perfect way what a blessing to walk in the way of the Lord in verse 33 he says

God makes my feet like the feet of a deer and he sets me on high places a deer is a picture of agility swiftness and sure footedness we were hiking around the other day and just as we're on the normal sidewalk trail we saw something amazing which was this a young deer maybe one year old not just trotting you know like a horse would trot but bounding it was like all four legs all up in the air all at once out of nowhere just right through the kind of the gutter and kept going it was just amazing so it was almost like deer in a class of their own and especially David on the run you know the enemy persecuting him running into the cliffs he's a shepherd he's simple he can go in there and hide remember in first Samuel how the Philistines they're very wealthy and powerful and they had these iron chariots well what good is a chariot going to do if you're in the middle of these desert rocks you can't chase them down so there he is poor simple humble trusting the Lord and it's like the Lord makes him like a deer bounding they can't even come close to catching him in verse 34 he says he teaches my hands to make war so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze notice how he's using his own body to reflect on God's faithfulness he started with his feet in verse 33 now he's onto his hands in verse 33 also in his arms now in verse 35 he says you also have given me the shield of your salvation your right hand has held me up your gentleness has made me great verse 36 you enlarged my path underneath me so my feet did not slip some translations say so my ankles didn't twist this is what it's like to be under the rock of God even at war even persecuted may this be the comfort for God's people around the world and for you and me with spiritual attacks and persecution as well

[20 : 01] Jesus said in Matthew 7 verse 24 whoever obeys God's word builds their life on the rock God is your refuge and strength God is my shield and my stronghold you see that image here here's the next image it's of a strong tower and where that last one left off where he's saying my feet won't slip in chapter 2 he says God is my fortress like it's it's an elevated rock way up there and my deliverer God is my tower when you're up on the tower the fortress of God's kingdom your view expands it's elevated it's lifted up and your perspective is set in the broadest frame the contrast to God as our fortress would be to be down in the pit in the mire the quicksand that's pulling you down and burying you no but God lifts me up and sets my feet where I won't slip

I won't get sucked down Psalm 40 verse 2 builds on this theme as well God brought me up out of a horrible pit out of the miry mud and has set my feet on a rock he establishes my steps it's the same theme that David is reflecting on in Psalm 18 verse 34 as well and 36 he says from this position of protection verse 37 I can now pursue my enemies and overtake them neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed verse 38 I have wounded them so that they could not rise how has David done this verse 39 because you have armed me with strength for the battle the Lord lifts David up into the strong tower and equips him for war well the next image is God now on the offensive God as a crushing boulder in verse 39 he says you have subdued under me those who rose up against me you have also given me the necks of my enemies so that I destroyed those who hated me verse 41 they cried out but there was none to save even to the Lord but he did not answer them so there's

David lifted up on the rock of God and there's those who have rejected the kingdom of God and opposed God now they're begging for mercy and God is bringing justice it's like a crushing boulder rolling down advancing and if he's not your fortress and you're hidden in him he's gonna steamroll everything in its way the kingdom of God will advance it will not slow down as we drive to the mountains maybe going west on I-70 from here you'll see those yellow signs that say rocks falling I pointed one out to one of my sons the other day I said look at the size of those boulders it was like half of our vehicle and there's much bigger boulders up there waiting to just fall and smash whatever's gonna get under their way I want you to notice the contrast here if you go back to verse 21 David says something about his faith in the Lord as his rock in verse 21

David says I have not wickedly departed from my God he's not committed apostasy he's not rejected God the Lord has preserved his faith if you go back to verse 6 we hear David saying in my distress I called upon the Lord I cried out to my God and he heard my voice from his temple and my cry came before him even to his ears David has put himself under the Lord as his king and as his rock what a contrast this is to those who reject the Lord who cry out but now it's too late their cry in verse 38 and verse 39 I'm sorry their cry is in verse 41 they cried out to the Lord but there was none to save this is not a cry of faith and repentance like David's was but it was a cry of those who have departed from God and who just now want to escape the natural consequences of their rebellion

God is offered to all by grace now and there's a time where he is offered by grace no longer that would be the time of his judgment and his wrath now is the time to receive his grace and the news doesn't get any better as we see this final image of the rock we could say it's a rock now used as a millstone the millstone was one rock put on top of the other and you'd put the kernels of grain in between and then you would have something very strong like oxen pull it around in a circle so that the millstone is crushing what's in between turning grain into fine flour notice what he says in verse 42 then I beat them as fine as the dust before the wind I cast them out like dirt in the streets you have delivered me from the strivings of the people at the end of his reign David is going to unite all these tribes into one kingdom before that they're in civil war there's a massive upheaval who will be the king of

[25 : 40] Israel who will we follow and they become united under David it was a mixed company that was striving a striving people by contrast verse 43 tells how the Lord ends it under David's reign a people I have not yet known shall serve me it's a description of Israel uniting but also more than that it's worldwide dominion and verses 44 and 45 describe how God will advance his kingdom in two ways the first way God will advance his kingdom invisibly look at verse 44 as soon as they hear of me they obey me they don't even need to see a display of power they will hear the reputation and the name and they will obey the second way his kingdom will advance is powerfully these foreigners will submit to me verse 45 they fade away and they come frightened from their hideouts

God's kingdom it cannot be stopped and after a great war there will be great victory in verse 46 he declares the Lord lives blessed be my rock and let the God of my salvation be exalted!

It is God who avenges me in verse 47 and subdues the people under me he delivers me from my enemies you also lift me up above those who rise against me you have delivered me from the violent men great victory as the Lord's kingdom advance with his anointed king under his shade well dear friends brothers and sisters who is God to you you will get from God either deliverance or destruction you either run to the living rock for refuge or you oppose him and get buried under the weight of his glory you reject God as your tower and you will get him as your millstone if God is your fortress however you will flourish he will establish you he will train you to walk on his perfect path make sure that he is your fortress the next movement in our final two verses of

Psalm 18 is going to thrust us forward in redemptive history in a way that David could have only imagined and with the spirit's help be held by faith verse 49 says therefore I will give thanks to you oh Lord among the Gentiles I will sing praises to your name verse 50 great deliverance he gives to his king and he shows mercy to his anointed to David and his offspring forevermore how does this thrust us forward in verse 50 the word offspring is singular one seed David was given great victory during his reign so that he and all of God's people and all the Gentiles one day could praise God through what God would do through David's seed forevermore

Charles Spurgeon commented over and beyond David or any other believer the Messiah our Savior is evidently the main and chief subject of this song and studying it I have grown more and more sure that every line of Psalm 18 has its deepest and profoundest fulfillment in him that's the end of Spurgeon's quote now we need to take one step we could take many in between let's go to one step before the New Testament would you turn please to Daniel chapter 2 I'd love for you to see this with your own eyes Daniel chapter 2 so after the Lord unites his kingdom under David as you know the history of Israel the people rebel they don't stay under the rock of God they turn away from him they turn to all the pagan idols their hearts don't love the Lord and for disobedience they bring upon themselves curses they won't stay close to the Lord as their fortress and so they get banishment from his land they get exiled and carried away

[30 : 22] I love how it's from that place of exile and banishment that the Lord gives some of his most glorious promises of covenant faithfulness and grace would you look at Daniel chapter 2 verse 34 as an exile in Babylon carried off the Lord reveals to this wicked king of Babylon in a dream the advancement of his kingdom which Daniel then interprets a stone cut out without hands will strike this image this idol and it'll hit it on the feet of iron and clay and break them to pieces verse 35 then the iron the clay the bronze the silver and the gold all representing different kingdoms of men will be crushed together you hear the same language as Psalm 18 turn to dust and they will become like chaff from the summer threshing floors the wind will carry them away so that no trace of them will be found these kingdoms of men and the stone the one that was hewn out of the rock not by human hands but by

God that stone that struck the image became a mighty mountain and filled the whole earth now look at verse 45 the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed and the kingdom shall not be left to other people it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever God the rock of ages made God the son to be born as a man from the line of David the promised seed Romans 15 7 interprets Psalm 18 for us Jesus Christ confirmed all of God's promises so that the Gentiles all the nations might glorify God for his mercy Paul is quoting verse 49 of Psalm 18 you can turn back to Psalm 18 and Paul writes in

Romans 15 for this reason I will confess you says Jesus among the Gentiles and sing to your name Peter quotes in 1 Peter 2 6 he quotes Isaiah 28 16 behold I am has laid Jesus Christ as the foundation for my kingdom a stone a tested stone a precious cornerstone a sure foundation you see how this rock becomes a mighty mountain and fills the earth Jesus Christ the living rock in the flesh he was proven in war Psalm 18 verse 39 think of how God armed our Lord Jesus Christ with strength for the battle Jesus went to war as God's ultimate anointed king the promised Messiah his kingdom of heaven advanced on this earth like never before

Jesus fulfilled Psalm 18 verse 37 he pursued his enemies and he overtook them think in the gospels how the demons ran away from Jesus in terror how disease and sickness abuse those fled from him they couldn't stand to be in the holy presence of God the son in the flesh as Jesus preached the kingdom of heaven life flourished under his reign in Matthew 5 5 Jesus says blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy he described the kingdom of God he described the values of the kingdom of heaven under his rule the blameless sinless son of God he accomplished the righteousness that his people need in verse 38 of

Psalm 18 the forces of darkness fell under his feet it's a description of the enemy turning their backs to you running away retreating and then you pursuing them and trampling them down in Joshua chapter 10 verse 24 he uses that same description to fall under the feet of the king in Joshua he had the conquered enemies lay down with their backs facing upward their noses to the dirt and Joshua called the leaders of Israel and they put their feet on the backs of the necks of the conquered enemies it's a picture of total victory utter surrender by the enemies of God that's the victory that Jesus Christ claims he took on the sin of his people and he paid his people's death penalty in order to give us eternal life and by doing this our

[35 : 39] Lord Jesus crushed the serpent's head the enemy the powers of darkness fell under the feet of Jesus he trampled them down he slayed that ancient dragon and he killed sin's curse for us and our Lord Jesus rose he fulfilled Psalm 18 verse 46 the Lord lives blessed be my rock and let the God of my salvation be exalted to say that God lives it's to say that he's the covenant Lord and as our covenant Lord and king ruling over his people he's not passive but active he's not static but dynamic he's not sleepy he's energetic he's not aloof or distant he's vigilant to save his anointed one and all who will take refuge in Jesus our

God lives and he lives to intercede for his people and he lives to advocate for his people and he lives to comfort his people by his Holy Spirit so that we have no guilt in life no fear in death because Jesus Christ the living rock in the flesh he was proven in war the Holy God did not deny Jesus Christ his righteous anointed servant he did not deny him the reward of his victory would you look at Psalm 18 verse 43 rising victorious God made Jesus the head of the nations and now people from every coastland and island they serve Jesus Jesus said in John 10 15 I laid down my life for my sheep and I have other sheep which are not of this fold I must bring them in also and when they hear my voice they will follow me and there will be one flock and one shepherd this fulfills

Psalm 18 verse 44 that we too foreigners! who are outside of his Old Testament covenant we joyfully submit to Jesus as king of kings and as soon as we hear his voice we obey him how secure are God's people in his salvation how safe we are as secure as Christ is in his father's covenant of faithfulness to him because of verse 50 would you look at Psalm 18 verse 50 God has bound himself to bless his anointed king Jesus and all his spiritual seed forever more 1st Peter 123 tells us that we are born of Christ not of perishable seed we're born of that imperishable seed we are the spiritual offspring of Jesus Christ safe secure in him because the father has bound himself to his son and his covenant and now all

God's people from every nation tribe and tongue can enjoy life in the shade of the rock our risen glorified Christ the same God that David knew in Psalm 18 in the flesh Jesus Christ calls his people from among all the nations to worship God the father God the son and guide the holy spirit Jesus who leads the worldwide!

church in worship we sing as we do on a Lord's day morning like today with all the host of heaven the words of Revelation 11 15 the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign forever and ever life in the kingdom of Christ is good he's our stronghold Philippians 4 19 tells us he supplies all we need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus blessed be my rock I encourage you to ask one another after the service later this week how good is life with Jesus as your king how blessed how joy filled you're going to hear testimony after testimony that

[40 : 26] God is my rock too God is my shelter God is my protector I flourish in his kingdom let the God of our salvation be exalted the Lord lives and blessed be our rock let's pray and thank him!

oh God our living savior the rock of ages let us hide ourselves in you we trust that you will continue to protect and shelter and provide for all of our needs we bless you and in you we enjoy every true blessing through Jesus Christ by the work of his Holy Spirit please apply your goodness your gentleness your covenant faithfulness to your people one more time today Lord we ask for your glory amen