

In His Everlasting Arms

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 June 2020

Preacher: Rev. Aaron Roberts

[0 : 00] The passage that we're looking at tonight speaks about God as a refuge, and we can run to Him, and we can even bring our mess and our brokenness and our sin to Him, knowing that as we confess, He forgives.

We're going to do that now, and you'll hear our intercessor, Brenda, reading along with me. Now, let's confess our need together. Almighty Father, Lord of heaven and earth, we confess that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed.

Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, because of Your great goodness. According to Your many mercies, put away our offenses, wash us thoroughly from wickedness, and cleanse us from our sins.

For Jesus Christ's sake, amen. Amen. Almighty Father, in Your great love, You gave Your dearly beloved Son to die for us.

Grant that through His cross, our sins may be put away and remembered no more against us, and that, cleansed by His blood and mindful of His sufferings, we may take up our cross daily, and follow Him in newness of life until we come to His everlasting kingdom.

[1 : 27] Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. Our scripture reading tonight, this week, has been created by the Kids Ministry again, and it's been so helpful not just to hear God's word, but to see it acted out for us in something called Bible play.

So, let's listen to God's word, our final reading in Deuteronomy. There is none like God, O Jeshurun, who rides through the heavens to Your help, through the skies in His majesty. The eternal God is Your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms. And He thrust out the enemy before you, and said, Destroy.

So Israel lived in safety, Jacob lived alone, in a land of grain and wine, whose heavens drop down like dew.

Happy are you, O Israel, who is like you, a people saved by the Lord.

[2 : 56] The shield of Your help, and the sword of Your triumph. Your enemies shall come fawning to you, and you shall tread upon their backs.

And now we come to the sermon. So, we are at the end of our series in Deuteronomy, and tonight we're looking just at the last couple of verses of chapter 33.

So, chapter 34 is the story of Moses' death. So, in chapter 33, we're literally into the last recorded words of Moses. You remember that the book of Deuteronomy is essentially a series of sermons that Moses preached to God's people before they entered the promised land.

Now, if you sort of run your eyes over chapter 33, you'll see Moses finishes his final sermon, not with instruction, but with a series of blessings.

A blessing for each of the tribes. And then, right at the end, right at the end point, a blessing for all of God's people. And that's what we're looking at. Just four verses, the last words of Moses.

[4 : 17] And they are such beautiful words. And captured in just these few sentences, it's the answer to the question, where is God?

Where is God? Which is a great question right now, isn't it? Where is God in all of this mess? So, let's get into it. First, we'll have a look at verse 26.

Let me read that to you. There is none like God, O Jeshurun. Jeshurun. So, that phrase there, that's that little word there, Jeshurun. That's like the sort of a nickname for Israel.

There is none like God, O Jeshurun, who rides through the heavens to your help, through the skies in his majesty. So, where is God? Well, firstly, God is above us.

God is above us. Moses wants to furnish our imagination with this image of God sort of moving around the heavens. And it's a wonderful picture. It's a picture of someone that is moving around

unhindered, unrestrained, free to move wherever they want.

[5 : 28] And what does God do with his freedom? You'll see it here. He rides through the heavens to your help. Do you ever think about this?

Is that on your radar? God rides to help you. God thinks about you. You're on his mind. He not only thinks about you, he rides to you, he acts.

Folks, if you know anything about ancient belief systems or ancient cosmology, you'll know that the old gods were completely self-serving. They didn't do anything for mere mortals unless the mortals could somehow, you know, manipulate them.

But the true God, the true God serves people. And this is just most profoundly and beautifully captured in the life of Jesus, who came to be with us and serve us, even to give up his life for us.

Now, if you'll listen to this and you wouldn't say you're a particularly religious person, perhaps you're wondering whether there, you know, even is a God. Friends, seek out, let me say it like this.

[6 : 40] Follow the God that actually shows up. Follow the God who appeared. Follow the God who thinks on you and acts. And this is Jesus.

So where is God? Firstly, he's above us, working on our behalf. Where else is God? He's with us right now. Verse 27.

The eternal God is your dwelling place. What does this mean? Well, dwelling place is just a fancy way of saying home. And when a home is good, it's a place you can be yourself.

It's a place of rootedness. It's a place of safety and security. It's a place where you can turn up looking terrible and they kind of have to open the door and let you in.

To dwell with God, it means to live out of that space, knowing that you are loved and accepted and safe in this home, safe with God no matter what happens.

[7 : 43] God is with you. So to dwell with God, it means that, it means we are his. And that changes us, doesn't it?

It means we anchor our hopes and our motives and our desires and our actions. We anchor them all to God. So where is God?

He's above us. He's unrestrained. He's with us. He's our home. And next, he is, he's below us.

Look at the last part of verse 27. And underneath are the everlasting arms. I just think these are some of the most beautiful words in Scripture.

What does it mean? Underneath are the everlasting arms. No matter what is happening in your life, below you are everlasting arms.

[8 : 46] It's just such a wonderful image, isn't it? Again, Moses wants to furnish your imagination with that picture. You know, when you think of this, you're thinking probably of a parent holding a child, holding on to that child.

That's the picture, isn't it? Now, hold that picture in your mind. Just hold it there for a moment. I'm not sure how you're all coping with what's going on in the world right now.

I have been quite affected by it. I was on the phone the other day speaking to an old mate of mine and they asked me how I was going and I just had one of those moments of just being sort of, you know, completely honest with them.

And I said, yeah, I said, I've just, it's been really weird. I've just been randomly really sad sometimes and other times really irritated and annoyed by stupid things and also super tired and it's really weird.

And my wife is in the other room and she's listening in and she yells out, you're depressed. You're depressed. And so I try and ignore her and I carry on the conversation and then she yells out again, you're showing all the symptoms of clinical depression.

[10 : 04] You're depressed. So my wife is a truth teller, which is mostly helpful. Look, perhaps like me, that just feels hard right now.

And Moses here says, below you, below you are everlasting arms. And that means you cannot sink into a sadness too deep for God not to hold you.

You cannot, look, maybe you're carrying lots of shame in your life. There is no humiliation too low that God can't deal with.

You cannot fall into some kind of trouble too low. You can't even die without God being able to deal with it. God is holding onto you. His arms are under you.

Now this is not a promise that, you know, your life will go smoothly because sometimes God removes these props from our life so we all know that His arms are there. So we learn to trust in the

most trustworthy thing in the world.

[11:14] One more thing about these arms. So I went on a hike today and with my kids and at one point one of them said, hold me, hold me, pick me up and carry me for the rest of the hike.

Like, I'm like, no, my arms are tired. Like, I could maybe carry them for like a couple of minutes but after that they just get tired. Our arms get tired. But listen to the description of these arms.

God's arm, they're everlasting arms. Every set of arms is going to fail you. But His will never tire. So where is God?

He's above you. He's with you. He's below you, holding on to you. And lastly, He's out in front of you. The second half of verse 27.

He thrust out the enemy before you and said, destroy. So God goes ahead of you and He knows what to do and it's tremendously encouraging, isn't it? Because God is always ahead of us.

[12:15] And this idea again finds its greatest fulfillment in Christ. God went ahead and dealt with our greatest enemy, the thing that separates us from God.

God went ahead of us all the way to the cross and died for our sins. And because of this, we can have eternity with Him. And when you read the last part, verses 28 and 29 of our passage, it gives this picture of domestic bliss, right?

It's a picture of shalom life with God. It's the life that awaits all Christians when Christ returns and makes all things right. And it talks about wine and bread and peace.

And that sounds like a really great night, doesn't it? Wine, bread and peace. Folks, it's going to be a fantastic eternity. Because of Christ, God promises nothing less than an eternity with Him, enjoying Him and enjoying each other.

And we're not there, but it will happen because God has gone before us. Let me finish with this. You know how sometimes we get people wrong, right?

[13:26] We think something about them. Actually, the opposite is true. We do this with God. Sometimes we doubt God is with us. Well, you know, the Bible sort of lifts the lid on who God is and lifts the lid on where God is.

He is above us, working to help us. He is beside us, dwelling with us. His arms are under us. We cannot fall from His care.

And He's in front of us, fighting for our peace. And I hope that's an encouragement to you. Amen.