

God Does Not Promise To Pamper, But To Protect

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[0 : 00] Verse 6 and 7, Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found.

Surely in the rush of great waters they shall not reach him. You are a hiding place for me. You preserve me from trouble. You surround me with shouts of deliverance.

And quite recently we looked at the first five verses of this psalm. And as we saw before this, this is one of David's psalms.

And as we know of David, David was somebody who had some of the most profound and incredible experiences. You and I may not have the depth of experience that David went through.

But there is no doubt at whatever level of experience that we have, we will always find a mirror in some way in the psalms of David.

[1 : 09] And we know that for David there were times when, and it's the same for ourselves, sometimes we struggle in life. Sometimes we feel that we're going to be overcome.

Sometimes we feel that life is so difficult for us that we don't know how we're going to make it even through a day. And that was often the case with David as well.

Sometimes he was really, really struggling. But there were other times, and it's the same with ourselves, sometimes life is going really well. It's going so smoothly.

And we find that everything just seems to be fitting together. These are wonderful times. And so it was with David. So that we find that sometimes he would be swinging from great heights of joy and celebration.

And his faith would be soaring. And other times he was plowing the depths. So it is with us, and so it is even in our Christian lives. That sometimes we're struggling with maybe our assurance of faith.

[2 : 17] Sometimes we feel that we say to ourselves, you know, that because of who I am, will I ever reach the shores of heaven? Because sometimes we look in at ourselves and we see all that's wrong and all the failures in our lives.

And we say, I don't know. And then there are other times our faith is soaring. And we're so sure and so persuaded that the Lord is with us and that all is well.

And so that's why, as I say, the Psalms of David are so precious to us. Now, in this Psalm, David, as we saw recently when we were looking at that, that he had gone from the place of sinning and sorrow, and he had been brought about by his sin, and he has actually now come to the place where he talks about shouts of deliverance, or that could be translated songs of deliverance.

And, you know, that's always the result of dealing with sin in the God-given way. Because when we sin, when we do wrong, there is often a tendency within us to try sometimes to ignore it, and to try to kid on, that didn't really happen.

It's not as bad as that. Or we try and justify it, or excuse ourselves, or ignore it, or pretend it didn't happen, and hope that the impact and the effects will go away.

[3 : 47] But it doesn't work like that. That's how David, first of all, tried to deal with it. He tried to ignore it. He tried to forget about it. He tried to live life as if everything was as it always was, but it wasn't.

And it wasn't until he actually dealt with his sin in the God-given way that he was able to find again joy and celebration, and as we say here, the songs of deliverance.

And so it is so important that we confess and that we acknowledge our sin. Because as I said, the result of that was that David found this forgiveness.

And then as a result of all that, David says in verse 6, Therefore, let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you. So we see right away clear evidence that a mark of grace in the life is this desire for prayer.

It's one of the earliest evidences that things have changed within a person's life. They can't but pray. They want to pray. You need to pray.

[5 : 03] It's not the kind of prayer of duty where you say, you know, really got to pray. You know, sometimes you can be taught as a child to pray, which is one of the greatest things.

Let me say to any children, if your parents teach you to pray, that's one of the greatest things they can ever do for you. And never stop praying. Make sure that you speak to the Lord every day. Speak to the Lord every night. And when you're able to read a little of his word every day so that he speaks to you in his word and you speak to him by prayer. But that's not the kind of prayer that we have here.

Where it might, sometimes it's a, we could term it a prayer of duty or like the prayer of a child. This is the prayer of somebody who really wants to pray. In fact, it becomes an instinct within the life. It's not something saying, you know, maybe, maybe I, maybe I should say a prayer. It's straight away, your heart begins to pray. You talk to the Lord.

[6 : 09] It might just be a word. It might be a sentence. It might be a lot of sentences. You might be, you might be looking for direction. You might be looking for help.

You might be asking the Lord to touch your heart, to do you good, to give you a sense of his peace, his joy, his love. All these kind of things. That's what happens when a person comes into a relationship with the Lord.

You know, when you're in a relationship with anybody, you talk. We're told it's good to talk. And it's an important, it's a vital part of relationship is communicating with one another.

And once a person comes to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they've entered into this relationship where they have to talk. They need to talk. It's not something, as I say, that is a kind of a duty that's placed upon.

It's a new desire within our heart that wants to speak to the Lord. Remember Saul of Tarshish, when he was converted on the road to Damascus.

[7 : 15] We were thinking about that last week. He was, when the Lord told Ananias to go and see Saul. Ananias said, Saul?

I can't go to see Saul. That's the worst persecutor that the church has. And remember what the Lord said to him. Behold, he prays. In other words, he's a changed man.

His desire now is to speak to me. And this was a great evidence in his life of the fact that he had started to pray. And so we see that when grace comes into a person's heart, one of the first things that is obvious, that is evident, is this sense of need.

There's a real sense of need and dependence upon God. And that's why we pray. Because we're dependent upon God. This is an evidence of grace.

You know, before a person becomes a Christian, they don't feel a dependence upon God. Unless, unless maybe there's a crisis in their life all of a sudden. And they think, oh, I'm going to say, God help me here.

[8 : 26] But the Christian is somebody who has this growing awareness of their dependence upon God.

That their life is actually lived in Him. And you see, that's what makes it so hard to become a Christian. Because we don't want to give up our own will.

We want to be boss of our own life. We think we're strong enough to make it through. We don't want to have to lean on anybody in life. But the Christian learns to lean and wants to lean upon the Lord. And when you lean upon the Lord, you're praying to the Lord. And so that's what David is talking about here. And he's saying, here is the person, therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you.

And of course it's the Lord alone who can make us willing to be dependent upon Him. And if you've never come to that place or point in life. And maybe you're saying, I don't understand this.

[9 : 32] I don't mind coming to church. I don't mind reading God's Word now and again. But I don't want to have to live my life depending upon God. Do you know what's the greatest thing that you could ever do?

Because you will discover that God gives you a strength in life that you never had before. And He enables you to cope in life in a way that you were never able to before.

It's the most wonderful thing to do. And so it's God alone who can change your lives. A sermon can. We can be moved under God's providence.

We can be moved under sermon. But we won't be actually changed unless we submit to the rule and to the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now David here calls a believer godly.

Now we often use the expression of somebody would say, this person is godly. Of somebody who's an exceptional Christian. Here's somebody and you can see his walk or her walk.

[10:39] And it's just so Christ-like. And everything that they do. And everything that they say. And the way they live their life. You say to yourself, you know, that person is saintly.

And so it might be only, there might only be so many Christians that you would actually say, label us godly. But that's not what David is talking about here.

David is talking about every person. Everyone. That knows God. The godly person is somebody that has God in their life.

In their heart through the coming of the Holy Spirit. To dwell within them. The godly person is somebody who loves God. Who follows God. Who depends upon God.

Who seeks God. God. That's a godly person. And that is every Christian. It's the same way in the New Testament. They talk of saints. Now again, you tend to think of a saint as somebody very special.

[11:43] I would never expect anybody to tell me a saint. Because I'm so aware of all that's wrong in my own life. And so I'm sure we all feel like that. But the Bible talks of the New Testament Christians as saints.

Because they have come to this place, to this point of accepting the Lord Jesus as Savior. And David, of course, is referring to himself.

He's putting himself in this category of the godly. And we've got to remember that David has just come from off the back of his great sin. With Bathsheba and against Uriah.

Where he had Uriah put to death in the most treacherous way. Yet he's still godly. Now we might, we might, if we were living around at the time of David and we saw what David did.

We'd say to himself, poor David, no way are you godly. But God was still David's god. And David had dealt with his sin in the God-given way.

[12:51] And God had dealt with David, yes, by forgiving his sin. Although what David did, the consequences of his sin continued. And remember how he had Uriah put to death to try to cover what he had done.

In the most treacherous way possible. And God said to him, because of what you've done, the sword will never leave your family. And you read the history of David and how true that is. Yes, God forgave him his sin.

But you know what it says? We reap what we sow. And so David discovered how true that was. Now it's very interesting that the word translated godly here is related.

It's related to the Hebrew word for both mercy and loving kindness. So the godly person is somebody who has discovered God's mercy and God's loving kindness in their own life.

Isn't that lovely? A godly person is somebody who has come to discover the reality of God's mercy and God's loving kindness in their life.

[14:01] And that's true of every single Christian. That you have discovered God's mercy towards you. You have discovered his loving kindness. And I think it goes without saying that once a person discovers God's mercy and God's loving kindness, that they in turn ought to display that mercy in their own lives.

It's a, it's, there's something far wrong for any person who is declaring to be a Christian who is completely void of mercy or void of love.

Because that can't happen. If a Christian, somebody who's a professing Christian, you see that there's absolutely no mercy in that person. Well, that is a, that speaks to us that God's, that they don't know what God's mercy is.

So, you see, there has to be this display of mercy and loving kindness in their life. And so, in the context that we have here, the godly person is the one who agrees with God's judgment.

And that's what David is doing here. David agrees with God's judgment. You see, we all know that we, we, we read about it in, in, in the book of Samuel of how David, that he gave in to lust.

[15:28] And he took Bathsheba who belonged to Uriah. And he had an affair with her. And then, of course, when discovered what had happened and that Bathsheba was expecting, he thought, I have to kill Bathsheba's husband.

Because if he finds out, you know, I'm in trouble. And so he has, he has Uriah killed. And David tried to conceal that and cover it all up.

And he thought he'd get away with it. Until, remember, when God sent the prophet. And he told the story about, remember, the sheep and the lamb and so on. And you are the man.

And then David was, he was absolutely consumed with guilt. And you see, this is what David is saying. That the godly person is the person who agrees with God's judgment.

Because David didn't look at it and say, oh, you know, I made a mistake. No. He was seeing it from God's perspective. And God saw that sin as ugly and heinous and vile and repugnant.

[16:32] And deserving of judgment. And David agreed with it. And he put up his hands and he said, yes, Lord, I agree with all you're saying. But he dealt with it, as we say, in the God-given way.

In where he was seeking God's forgiveness for it. And so, this again is very important to see what we do. Because, you know, sometimes when you and I sin.

And we feel guilty before God. What do we do? We keep away from God. We adopt the Adam approach.

Remember when Adam and Eve fell in the garden. And disobeyed God. What did Adam do? He ran away. That's what he did. He ran away. Just like sometimes when little children.

I'm sure you all. Maybe some. I'm sure all your children today. They're not as bad as we were when we were growing up. But when we did something bad. Very often. That's what we did. We legged it. We ran away as fast as we could.

[17:32] And that's kind of human nature when we do wrong. And we tend to try and do that from God as well. We try and run away from God. We don't want to own up. And, you know, maybe you're here today as a Christian.

And you're carrying unconfessed sin. And you're never faced up to it because you're running away from God. Because you say, I don't know. I can't face God with this. And you know this.

As long as you do that, you'll never enjoy God's fellowship and communion and blessing. You need to be up front and open with God and get back and say, Lord, look, I need to get back here.

I'm going to stop running. I want to run to you now. And sometimes it's the most difficult thing is to get down on your knees and say, Lord, I'm really, really sorry. But, you know, the moment you do that, things change.

And that's what David is saying. That the godly one, he's a person who offers prayer when God is to be found. And can I also say that if you're here today and you're on the run from God or in whatever way, this is where God can be found.

[18:38] Because he promises to be where even two or three gather together in his name. So God can be found here, right here, right now. So go to him and say, Lord, please forgive me.

Please have mercy upon me. Cleanse me from all my sin. And so that's what David is saying. You must seek him while he is to be found.

And so this is, as we say, this is such a time as this. And, you know, then in verse 7, David talks of the shouts of deliverance. Or, as we said, the songs of deliverance. And, you know, one of the very first signs that things are not right between yourself and God is the loss of Christian joy.

You know, when I believe that in this period when David had sinned against God, that his harp was probably put on the shelf. David was a great instrumentalist, great poet, great songster.

So he wrote just so many wonderful psalms. I don't know if he actually wrote anything in this period until afterwards.

[19:53] Because his joy was gone. How do we know that? In Psalm 51, which is his great confession about his sin, what does he say? Restore me, you salvation's joy.

David had lost the joy. And that's one thing David was known for. You go through his psalms, look at his life. Yes, there were difficulties, but he was somebody who was always singing.

There's so much praise in his life. You look at David dancing. He was exuberant. He was passionate. Not at this period. David was down and there was a heaviness about him, a depression, a darkness in David.

His joy was gone because he wasn't right with God. And that's why it's so important that we get right with God. And when we get right with God, we will find that that joy is being restored.

And that's what happened. Joy returns through the confession of sin. And then we see very briefly in conclusion the assurance of the psalmist.

[21 : 01] And he says, surely in the rush of great waters they shall not reach him. You are a hiding place for me. You preserve me from trouble. You surround me with the shouts of deliverance.

Surely in the rush of great waters they shall not reach him. You know, two of the great blessings of life are fire and water. But they're also two of the great terrors of life.

Because out of control, both of these things are frightening. And David talks here about the rush of water, like the tsunami. We all remember pictures of the tsunami and the utter devastation.

You can't even begin to imagine the horror of being caught up in that. Well, that's kind of what he's talking about here, the rush of great waters. But David is showing here very clearly.

Yes, life will have its threats and its problems and its troubles and its fears and its anxieties and all these things. But when we have the Lord, we can count upon him being with us in these things.

[22 : 07] As we say, God doesn't promise to pamper us. But he promises to protect us. Remember Saul, the Apostle Paul, when he was journeying on the ship.

God told him, you know, there's going to be a fearful storm. This ship is going to go down. There's going to be a shipwreck. But everybody is going to be saved on it. They had the storm.

They had the shipwreck. But their life was preserved. Of course, there will come a time when our lives will come to an end. But even there, we can count on God.

God will be with us every time. And he will deliver us from the enemies within death. He will protect us and he will keep us.

That's what David is saying here. Because you see the words that we have, all these wonderful words, where it says, Yes, there's all the dangers, but they won't reach. They're hiding.

[23 : 08] Preserve. Surround. So David is here telling us very simply that if we're out of sync with God, then we don't enjoy his company, his presence.

David couldn't count upon God's deliverance when he was living out of step with him. But once he was back in step, then the peace returned, the joy returned.

You know, forgiveness is good. Fellowship is even better. And we won't know God's fellowship till first of all we know his forgiveness. So may we all seek today to know God's forgiveness, the great forgiveness of having all our sins cleansed in Christ.

And that we might know the fellowship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Let us pray. Lord, we again give thanks for your word and pray that this word may indeed be a blessing to our souls, that we might be nourished by it and encouraged by it.

Take us all home safely, we pray, and cleanse us from our every sin. In Jesus' name we ask it all. Amen. Amen. We're going to conclude singing from Psalm 13.

[24 : 25] Psalm 13. And sing Psalms. Psalm 13. Psalm 13. How long will you forget me, Lord?

Will you forget always? How long, Lord, will you hide your face and turn from me your gaze? How long must I be sad each day in deep perplexity?

How long will my opponent stand in triumph over me? O Lord, my God, consider me and give me your reply. Light up my eyes or I will sleep the sleep of those who die.

Then would my enemy declare, at last I've laid him low. And so my foes would sing for joy to see me overthrow. But still I trust your constant love.

You save and set me free. With joy I will extol the Lord who has been good to me. Psalm 13. How long will you forget me, Lord?

[25 : 26] Amen. Will you forget me, Lord?

Will you forget always? How long will you hide your face and turn from me your gaze?

How long will you hide your face and turn from me your gaze?

I will part of you, Lord? and stand with triumph over me.

O Lord, I have considered me and give me your reply.

[27 : 05] I will see the seeds of those who die.

When would my enemy be there, at last I made him know.

And so my host would sing for joy, to see my overthrow.

But still I trust your constant love, you save and set me free.

With joy I will and scold the Lord, who has been good to me.

[28 : 40] Now may the grace, mercy and peace of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.