

O Lord, My Strength

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[0 : 00] We're going to sing in Psalm 91 from Sing Psalms, our 91 from Sing Psalms. And we'll sing verses 1 to 6, the three sections there.

It's on page 121. The one whose dwelling is with God Most High, in the Almighty's shadow safe will rest. He is my refuge, I say of the Lord, my fortress and my God, in him I trust.

Surely he saves you from the fowler snare and rescues you from deadly pestilence. Under his wings a refuge you will find. His faithfulness will be your strong defense.

Verses 1 to 6. The one whose dwelling is with God Most High, in the Almighty's shadow safe will rest.

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[1 : 39] Surely he saves you from the fowler snare and rescues you from deadly pestilence.

Under his wings a refuge you will find. His faithfulness will be your strong defense.

You will not fear the tenor of the night. Or let the eye roll flying in the day.

Or pestilence that in the darkness stops. Or plague at noon that carries hope away.

Let's turn again to Psalm 18 that we read. And looking at the beginning of the Psalm.

[3 : 09] Verses 1 to 3. Psalm 18, verses 1 to 3. I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer.

My God, my rock in whom I take refuge. My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised. And I am saved from my enemies.

When we're, or if there's ever a situation where we're delivered from death or delivered from dangers, delivered from a situation which we felt was going to just envelop us or that could indeed kill us, the relief that we would experience would be overwhelming.

And I think there would be a sense of outpouring. Because when this sense of relief gives way into words, you would find yourself just, just, your heart would be so stirred and you would be just pouring out so much thankfulness and indebtedness for being spared.

And that's what this Psalm is really about. Because you see at the heading of it here, it says, David, the servant of the Lord, who addressed the words of this song to the Lord on the day when the Lord rescued him from the hand of all his enemies, from the hand of Saul.

[4 : 36] You've got to remember, David was being pursued. There were times when Saul had thousands of his elite soldiers with him, hunting through the rocks and searching for David.

And it must have been horrific, terrifying for him. Because as we know, there were moments that he barely escaped with his life. And he lived with us under this threat and danger for about seven years.

There were seven years. Saul was hunting for David. So that's part of, there's just this outpouring of absolute relief. And David, as he declares his love for the Lord, he highlights the many different things that the Lord is to him.

For instance, he says, the Lord is his rock and his fortress, his deliverer, his shield, the horn of his salvation. There are all these things, these titles that he's giving to the Lord.

But you know, there should be something of that thankfulness and joy in our hearts as well.

Because we have been delivered from enemies, which were far worse than Saul, and far more deadly and dangerous than Saul ever was.

[5 : 46] And very often we forget that. There might be times just when we have been saved, when we've been delivered. And if we think back and we say, just as we sang at the beginning, he took me from a fearful pit and from the miry clay.

But sometimes we forget just what we have been delivered from. Because we've got to remember that the enemies that were after us, and the enemies that are still pursuing us, but the enemies that

were pursuing us then, had only one aim in view, and that was to take us to hell.

Satan and his legion of angels, one purpose is to destroy our soul eternally. And that's why it is very important for us to stop and to think and reflect and to remember what it is that God has done for us in Jesus Christ, where we have been delivered.

And so we find that this is part of what David is really singing about. This is his great joy. This deliverance. To deliver.

Every day we get mail delivered, we get parcels delivered in different ways. There are people who are paid. That's their job. They're paid to deliver things to your home.

[7 : 07] Things maybe you've ordered, or things that people send, or letters people send, or whatever it is. That's their job. They're paid to deliver this to you. In a sense, Jesus Christ, he has paid a price to deliver you to the Father in heaven.

He is going to bring you home. He is going to take you home safe and sound. It is his job to deliver you from, and to deliver you to, which we'll just see in a moment.

And David begins by saying, I love you, O Lord. And it's very, very personal. In fact, this, the particular way that he uses this, it's a kind of, it's almost an emotional, intense desire.

It's a kind of love that just wants to reach out, and it's physical. It's a kind of love that just wants to lay hold, and to hug. It's a very, it's a passionate, intense desire to express just what's within the heart.

That's the kind of love that David has at this moment. It's not a, it's not a sort of a, it's not an airy-fairy idea, but it is intense, and it is powerful love.

[8 : 29] It's a kind of love, I think, that Mary Magdalene displayed when Jesus revealed himself to her in the garden. Remember, after he rose from the dead, and she was so distraught, and thinking Jesus was a gardener, and remember he said to her, Mary.

And, remember he said, do not, well it says in the AV, do not touch me, do not lay hold on me. What Mary was obviously going to try and do was just hang on to Jesus.

That there was going to be this outpouring of love, and Jesus is saying to her, you can't keep me here. However much your love is real for me, you can't hold me here.

I am going to ascend to my father, and to your father. So, that's the kind of love that David is expressing here. And then, David, you'll notice, uses the word my.

It's actually used, I think, nine times. I counted, I'm not going to start counting it just now, but I think, don't start counting, I probably say eight, I probably stand, but I think I counted nine my's in it, which speaks about how incredibly personal God is to David.

[9 : 39] Because he's saying, I love you, O Lord, my strength, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer. It's my, my, my. And again, that is so important for us, where we're able to say, my God.

It's one thing to know of God, and to know about God, and to be theological, and understand so much of what the Bible is saying, but to be able to say, the Lord is my God, mine.

In a sense, almost nothing else matters in this world. This is the number one, that you're able to say, the Lord is my God. And that's one of the things you will find so often, amongst the writers of the Bible.

is the personalness of their faith. David was always talking about my God. The apostle is always using, all the apostles using this, this expression of my God.

And so the Lord is, is my God. And David is, then he, he, after declaring his, his love here, will just look very briefly at some of the things that he says.

[10 : 49] And he says, I love you, O Lord, who, my, my strength. And of course, that, that very simply, the Lord is the one who has given David strength.

David was, he mentions that, as we read through the Psalm, that he knew himself, his enemies were more powerful than he. And that if it was left to himself, he would have been devoured.

He wouldn't have coped. And you and I know exactly the same. If we don't know that, then I, then we're not in the right place.

If somehow we think that we have, that we have done, and that we are able to cope going through life, that we can defeat temptation on our own.

If we think that somehow our strength will prevail, then we're in our own place. We've all come to this place where we know it is only by the Lord's strength.

[11 : 48] And David says then that the Lord is my rock. Now, a rock gives stability. A rock is something that's foundational. It's there. Quite often you will hear, I've heard it so often said, that

maybe when a couple and one dies, and quite often they'll, in their sense of mourning, in the sense of loss, the sense of emptiness within their life, and they'll say, you know, he was or she was my rock.

It's the one that gave, that they were, it's just that that's how it is in life. There was this kind of inseparable bond that they had, and now there's just this sense of emptiness.

Well, the Lord is the rock. He is, he is the one who gives us the ultimate stability. He took me, he took me from a fearful pit and mighty clay and set my feet upon a rock, establishing my way.

That's the only way, the only way that your way can be established is when your feet are on a rock. And you and I know this world is so, so ever changing.

And there's always things coming in, and things that change, the goalposts are always changing. And it's so important that underneath, that our feet are on this rock.

[13:06] And then he says, you are my, my fortress. And again, a fortress, when here you are, you'd been, you'd been chased, you're out in the open. It's almost like there's, there's no one in, all of a sudden you see this place of safety.

And that's what the Lord has provided. Because we know the enemy, the great enemy of our soul, the devil, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking whom he may devour. And so this is what, what the Lord has done for us.

In Psalm 57, it says this, in the shadow of your wings, my refuge, I will place, until these sad calamities do holly overpass.

There's the, there's the sense of the fortress. There's the Lord saying, I, I want to keep you in there. Keep you safe, till these sad calamities overpass. And then David says, you are my deliverer.

This is the one who saves and rescues. And you know, that's what the Lord did for David all the time. And that's what he's doing for you, for you and me as well. We know, we talk about the, the search and rescue, helicopter.

[14:13] Well, in a sense, that's what Jesus has come to do into this world, to seek and to save, to search and to rescue, to save us, to deliver us. And delivering is not simply delivering from, it is delivering to.

We have been delivered from the fearful pit and miry clay, and we've been delivered to the rock where our feet have been set. And that's what the Lord has done. He has delivered us from heading to hell, and he's going to deliver us into heaven.

That's what salvation involves. It's going from the one extreme to the other, to the place of darkness, to the place of light. So it's a delivering from where we are into a place of security and safety.

So this is what's happening. And the wonderful thing, you'll find that quite often in the New Testament, about how you'll find Paul talking about the Lord, of how he has delivered, and of how he is delivering, and of how he will deliver.

And that simply is the fullness of the salvation. Because we can look to the past of what God has done in Christ. We can look to the present, at what he is continuing to do daily, and what he will do, where he will finally take us home.

[15:39] So our salvation, although it is guaranteed, we can talk about a past and a present and a future. It's all part of the one salvation. And then David says, The Lord is my rock, my fort, is my deliverer, my God.

And this is L-E-L. This is, of course, speaking of God Almighty. David is saying, My God is the Almighty God of heaven and earth.

And no matter what is happening all around, and all the chaos that might be part and partial of my life, He is in control. He rules. He's the creator God. He's the governor God.

He is the one who has everything within His hand. He does according to His will, with the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. And who can stay His hand? David knew this.

And that's why he's able to sing and say, This God is my God. And so it's wonderful to know that.

[16:43] And then he says, My shield. The Lord is a shield between you and millions of enemies.

You and I have no idea of how often enemies have tried, the enemies of God and the enemies of our soul have tried to destroy us.

I believe it's on a daily basis. You remember the Lord gives us, the Bible gives us this great insight in the book of Job. Pulls back the screens a little to show us some of the things.

And Satan was trying to destroy Job. But he couldn't get near him. And he was complaining. It's quite extraordinary because there is, in the whole spiritual realms at present, Satan has a roaming freedom that one day he won't.

He's going to be cast into the bottomless pit forever and ever and ever. But at the moment, yes, he is in hell, but he has freedom to move in this world.

[17 : 49] That's why he's called the God of this world. Read through the New Testament and the number of times that the apostles are talking about the spiritual warfare against rulers and principalities and powers.

Well, in the book of Job, it shows that, and in Revelation and different places, that Satan, while he accuses us, also, personally, he also accuses us before God.

He, at the moment, has in some way, and he still has an access, not that he's in heaven, but that he is able, in some way, to bring things before God.

And he was complaining before God. about Job. And he said, no wonder Job fears you. Do you know why he fears you? Because he built a hedge around him and all that he has.

It's because he have filled his life full of blessings, and everything is going swimmingly well. Of course he fears you. Take that away, and you will discover that Job is just like anybody else.

[18 : 57] And we know the story. We know what happened. We know the history of it, how the Lord permitted. He permitted for our good.

He permitted for Job's development and growth, and although Job went through one appalling calamity after another, God forbade that Satan would touch his actual life.

He couldn't kill him. But he gave him access to Job. And we just read of the havoc and destruction that was brought into Job's life.

That shows us the enemies that are around and about us all the time. You and I, we're so often oblivious to it. But God is protecting us.

He has put a hedge around you and around me and all that we have. And that's one of the reasons why we should be constantly praising and thanking God and also praying daily for protection.

[20 : 00] Because as we said, the evil one goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. And so, that is one of the reasons why David is saying, the Lord, he is my shield.

And then he says, the horn of my salvation. The horn of salvation talked about triumph. It talked about victory. And that is true. That's how it's going to be in Jesus Christ.

It will be ultimate victory. The Lord is going to take every single one home. The Lord has not stopped. You know, sometimes you say to yourself, you know, I worry about myself.

What if, what if I don't make it? Well, if it was up to you, you wouldn't make it. If it was up to me, I wouldn't make it. But praise the Lord, it's not up to you and up to me.

It's ultimately up to Jesus. And he has not lost one that he has been given by the Father. Not one. He has never in the past and he's not going to start losing now.

[21 : 05] He will never in the future. He will take every single one home. As we said earlier, delivered safely home. And so that's why David is saying, he's the horn of my salvation.

He is the one of triumph and victory. And that's why David then goes on. He says, I call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised. And that's what you and I should do is to praise the Lord.

When somebody does something good or something really worthwhile, you want to praise that. If somebody does something really good to you, you want to praise that passion and thank that passion for what they have done.

Well, that's what the Lord has done. And David says, he is worthy worthy to be praised. And then finally, he says, I call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised and I am saved from my enemies.

And the last thing before, should I mention that verse, he says, he is my stronghold. That's at the end of verse 2. And this is the idea of a high tower, a stronghold.

[22 : 17] And it's like a place, here you are, there's just enemies all around and you're able to go up into this, sometimes that stronghold is translated almost like a high tower.

And there you are, the enemies are around you and yet there's this place of rest, this place of refreshing, this place of security. It's like in Psalm 23 when the psalmist says, my table thou hast furnished in presence of my foes.

There's the enemies all around and yet the Lord has set a table. in the presence of your enemies. And yet, here you are, you're being furnished and nourished and strengthened.

That's what the Lord is continuing to do. And as we read and we think about what David experienced and endured, we take these things to ourselves and all the truths that are given there, all these definitions of who God is to David is applicable to you and to me as well tonight because God is all of these things to us as well.

Let us pray. Lord, we pray to bless us giving thanks for your word again to us and for all the different pictures that are given to us in Scripture as a rock and a refuge of a deliverer, of a shield, of a stronghold.

[23 : 43] and we give thanks, Lord, that in this life, which can sometimes be rough, sometimes it's beautiful and sometimes the going is smooth, sometimes it's difficult.

And we give thanks, O Lord, that in whichever situation we're in, we can look to you and count upon you. And so we pray that you will bless us. We pray to take us to our home safely.

Again, as we heard, we pray for the families that are mourning. We again remember the McKeever family and the Mackenzie family and the two Mackenzie families.

We commit them to your care. And watch over us, O Lord, we pray, and that you will do us good and that you will guide us in everything that we do, taking away our sin in Jesus' name.

Amen. We'll conclude singing in the 23rd Psalm from the Scottish Psalter, Psalm number 23, and we're going to sing the whole psalm. The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.

[24 : 49] He makes me down to lie in pastures green. He leadeth me the quiet waters by. My soul he doth restore again, and me to walk doth make within the paths of righteousness, even for his own name's sake.

Down to the last verse, goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me, and in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be. The whole psalm, the Lord's my shepherd.

The Lord's my shepherd, I am not one.

He made me down to lie in pastures green.

He leadeth me like quiet waters by.

[25 : 56] my soul he doth restore again, and me to walk of me within the path of righteousness.

his wicked Fel ■■■ras. He adored not man, He came to ELL fazer lose and has demand him all to not. yea, though I was in death of death, ■ UWE100, Yet will I fear not live, for thou art with me on thy road, and stuffy come for still.

My tiller love has furnished, in presence of my foes, my heaven, O God, with oil and joy, and my God, O God, O God, goodness and mercy of my life shall surely follow me, and in God's hours forevermore, my dwelling place shall be.

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.