

God's Treasured Hidden Ones

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[0 : 00] Well, seeking the Lord's help, please turn with me back to the passage we read in the Old Testament, in the Book of Psalms, and in Psalm 83.

And for our text and for our thoughts, we shall consider verse 3. Psalm 83, verse 3, where it says, They lay crafty plans against your people. They consult together against your treasured ones. Thinking especially about those words at the end, your treasured ones. Psalm 83, most people would agree, is a little red psalm.

It's not as well known as the other psalms that we find in the Psalter. Its neighboring psalms, Psalm 84 and Psalm 82, are quite well known.

Psalm 84, for its familiarity, How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts to me, etc. And Psalm 82, because it is quoted by our Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament, where he is affirming his divinity, where he is defending it.

[1 : 19] But then, sandwiched in between these two psalms is this little red psalm, Psalm 83. But this psalm, although it is little red by many, it does have a special interest of its own.

It is actually the completion of Asaph's collection of psalms. In the title of this psalm, we read that it was a psalm of Asaph.

Now Asaph, much like David, was a skilled musician. He was one of the men responsible for ministering with song before the tabernacle of the tent of meeting until Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem.

He was responsible for writing 12 of the psalms that we find today in the Psalter. Psalm 50 and Psalm 73 to 83 here.

The children of Israel were commanded to sing praises to the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph the seer in 2 Chronicles 29.

[2 : 31] He was indeed a very important figure. And Psalm 83 was the completion, the climax of the psalms that he wrote. This psalm also, as we mentioned before we sung it, happens to be an imprecatory psalm.

Those psalms which many people don't like to read or to sing because in it the psalmist is asking God to judge or even to curse his enemies.

Why is this the climax or culmination of Asaph's collection of psalms? Well, friends, could it be because this will also be our own end also?

For it is appointed for men to once die and after that comes the judgment where we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account for everything that we have done, good or bad.

Perhaps this is what Asaph is showing us here with the culmination of this collection of psalms.

[3 : 41] But what is it that we find in this psalm itself? Well, in this psalm, the enemies of God are pursuing the people of God. The enemies are saying in verse 4 that they are going to wipe out the people of God.

In verse 12, they say that they are going to take possession of them. This is the background as we come into this psalm. And Asaph begins in verse 1 by asking God not to ignore what is happening but for him to look down and to act against the enemies of the people of God.

Now, the enemies of the people of God are described as the enemies of God themselves. As we see in verse 2 where it says, For behold, your enemies, God's enemies.

Now, the enemies are listed in verse 7, 8, and 9 where we read of 10 nations that are spoken of. And commentators are unsure if this is speaking about a particular time in Israel's history or whether it's referring to their entire history collectively.

Those who think it's referring to a specific time believe it's speaking about the victory won during Jehoshaphat's time in 2 Chronicles 20. But we're unsure what time exactly it may be referring to. [5 : 10] The psalmist, after listing the enemies of God, he then looks back and he looks back to times where God delivered his people from the enemies.

In verse 9 and 10, the psalmist's mind is drawn back to the Canaanites with Tabora and Barak with the help of Jael also where God used them to destroy the enemies of God. And then in verse 11 and 12, he's brought to that of the Midianites where Gideon this time, where the Lord through Gideon brought deliverance for the people of Israel. He's remembering what God did in times past. And as one writer said, recalling these events, these events of God delivering his people, gave Asaph fresh boldness to ask something similar in this dire situation.

The psalm concludes with Asaph asking God that all the enemies of God may know that the Lord, Yahweh, Jehovah, is the most high over all the earth.

[6 : 28] The psalmist takes comfort in knowing that God will judge his enemies and deliver his enemies and deliver his people, sorry. And the reason he knows that God will deliver his people lies in the fact that he knows that the people of God are God's treasured hidden ones.

Take a look again at our text in verse 3 at the end of that where we read that we, the people of God, are said to be your treasured ones.

God's treasured ones. In the Psalter and in the authorised version, it says thy hidden ones. In the New King James, it says your sheltered ones.

In the NIV, it says those you cherish. They are all trying to convey what this word means. You see, in the Hebrew, it's actually only one word.

It's the word tzafan. And what this word essentially means is how we, the people of God, are tucked away and hidden away by God, as it were, as his most prized possession, his most treasured possession.

[7 : 52] I wonder if you've ever toured around a football stadium before. As you enter into their trophy room, you can see all the trophies that they've won in their history.

But you know, don't you, that these trophies aren't the real trophies themselves. They're just a replica. However, if a team has recently won a trophy, where they actually have possession of the real thing itself, oftentimes it's locked in a cabinet.

And people are often even prevented to not even touch it. Well, similarly, that is how we are described here. As God's treasured, hidden ones.

Locked away and prevented from being touched by anyone else. We are said to be God's treasured, hidden ones. But what more do these three words in English and one word in Hebrew tell us?

Well, with the time we have remaining, using Strong's definition, I want us to consider three definitions that we find this word to safan, to mean.

[9 : 05] Firstly, as God's treasured, hidden ones, we are reserved. Reserved. And what I mean by that is that we are reserved in Christ from all eternity.

Just like a parking space might be reserved for a very special person, we are reserved in a very special person. The Lord Jesus Christ.

Before the wheels of time were set in motion, in eternity past, God chose us in Christ. And he chose us not based on any foreseen faith or foreseen merit.

It's not as though God looked into the future and see who would be good enough and then he chose them. No, friends. He chose a people simply out of his mere good pleasure.

as the confession of faith tells us, those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid according to his eternal and immutable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, have chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory out of his mere free grace and love without any foresight of faith or good works or perseverance in either of them or of any other thing in the creature as conditions or causes moving him thereunto and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

[10 : 39] We are reserved in Christ, being chosen in Christ according to the secret counsel of his will. This is one aspect of what it means to be one of those who are treasured by God, his treasured hidden ones.

And friends, this doctrine of election, yes it can be hard for our heads to wrap around it, but this doctrine was revealed to be a comfort to the church.

You'll remember how St. Paul encourages the churches in Ephesus in his first chapter to the Ephesians. He gives God the glory for the Trinitarian work of salvation.

He speaks of how the Father chose us, the Son purchased us and the Spirit seals us. I remember hearing one speaker speaking of that chapter about the ABCs of our salvation.

How we are A, adopted, B, blessed, C, chosen. How the Spirit has been given to us as a deposit. Deposit. How we have received E, every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

[11 : 53] How we are F, forgiven. How we have received G, grace upon grace. And the list goes on. It's a very comforting chapter to the church.

The doctrine of election is comforting because it truly shows us that salvation belongs unto the Lord. It deprives us of any glory or any honour or any praise and instead gives all glory, honour and praise to the most high God.

It shows us that he is truly sovereign. And this doctrine, it actually also gives us confidence in our evangelism. Lots of people ask, if election is true, why bother evangelise?

What's the point? If God has reserved a people in Christ, they'll come no matter what. Well, friends, it's actually the case that we evangelise because of election.

If it was left to the freedom of our own wills, we who are dead in our sins, we who are God haters, what's the point of evangelism? We have no care for God naturally.

[13 : 15] Our God is a God who accomplishes his purposes through means, through instruments, even through sinful human beings. And as faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ, God is pleased, even through the foolishness of preaching, to bring souls from darkness into his most marvellous light.

Oh, dear friends, keep praying for those family members that are still strangers to grace and to God. Keep praying for those friends who might appear that they want nothing to do with the things of God.

Keep praying for those who are God haters, because our God is able to turn even the murderous heart of Saul to come to know him in an instant.

Our God is able to change hearts. No matter how far your loved one may be, in this day of mercy, they are never too far for the almighty, all powerful, God to work in them.

The Lord can intervene, for salvation belongs, as we've mentioned, not unto us, but to the Lord. Not unto us, Lord, not to us, but do thou glory take unto thy name, even for thy truth and for thy mercy's sake, says the psalmist.

[14 : 48] God has reserved a people in Christ. So then the question arises, how can we make sure, how can we know our calling and our election?

How can we know that we are the people of God? Well, John Calvin spoke about how Christ was like a mirror that we look into to make our election sure.

We know we are elect by looking to the elect one of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. We see our election in him.

Look to him, friends, tonight. Look to the Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah writes, look unto me, all ye ends of the earth and be ye saved for I am God and there is none else.

There is none else we can go to, friends. There is none else where we can find hope. We can be certain that we are safe in the arms of Christ for all time because this reservation, this being chosen in Christ, happened in eternity before the very foundations of the world were laid.

[16 : 09] God chose us in Christ. Christ. But however, just as we find in this psalm, we have enemies and we have an enemy looking to take possession of us and looking to wipe us out.

We have him who prowls around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Those false Christs, those false prophets looking to deceive, if it were possible, even the elect of God.

Satan hates that which belongs to God and he especially hates God's most prized possession. He tries to find them and so as he's looking for them, he's looking to take possession of them and he's looking to destroy them.

And so as he tries to find these chosen hidden ones of God, he cannot go far back into the councils of eternity because he is a creature made in time.

And so as he's looking for these hidden ones of God, he tempts mankind to sin. He tries to find if there's a secret in them.

[17 : 29] He tempts mankind to sin and he influences them to go against God. God, in his searching of the hidden ones of God, he knows that he cannot find where God has hidden them.

And so he thinks in himself, if I but tempt them to sin against God, to make them God haters, to make them filthy in sin and misery, to make them deserving of his eternal wrath, then surely, surely God would cancel his reservation of them.

Surely they would no longer be his most prized possession. Surely they would no longer be his treasured hidden ones.

Surely I will take possession of what God says are his. Well, does God cancel his reservation then? The enemy managed to tempt mankind into sin. Did he take possession of them? Did he wipe out the people of God, those who are reserved in Christ?

[18 : 49] No, brethren. We, as God's treasured hidden ones, are not only reserved in Christ, but secondly, we are hidden by a covering.

To saphan also means that we are hidden by a covering. As those who are God's treasured ones, as God's hidden ones, we are hidden, as it were, in the side of Christ's pierced side.

Just as Adam's bride came from his side, so to we, the church of God, as God's treasured hidden ones, we find ourselves hidden in Christ's side, as blood and water pour forth, covering them.

Even after we sinned against the Most High God, after we essentially spat in his face, wanting nothing to do with him, after through the temptation of the enemy, we were polluted and covered with sin, having no good within ourselves, being so unlovable, he continued to love us.

He continued to love us with that everlasting love, and he continued to value us as his most prized possession. He was not letting the enemy have his most prized possession.

[20 : 21] He was not letting the enemy have those who are reserved in Christ. He would not, and he could not let them go. And so again, in the councils of eternity, the most holy trinity, the three persons within the Godhead, they make a covenant, one with another, with their perfect, united will.

And as the Father reserved a people in Christ, Christ agreed, to willingly redeem them. The people of God, he willingly agreed to redeem them through his life, through his death, through his burial, and through his resurrection and ascension up on high.

As those who are God's treasured hidden ones, we who had fallen from the estate in which we were created, we see that the Son of God would not let us go.

God and so he embodies human flesh, he becomes a man, and he gives his own life as a ransom for many. As the Son of God gives his own life, we see that the demands of justice has been met. Through the temptation of the evil one, we who sinned against God have an infinite price to pay because we sinned against an infinitely holy God. And we cannot pay that price.

[21 : 51] That's why hell is eternal, because we cannot pay an infinite price that we owe. But Christ, friends, he who is of himself of infinite value, because he himself is divine, took that punishment upon himself.

An infinite price paid by an infinite person. He met the demands that was due to us in himself. He took our punishment, that curse that was ours, he took upon himself.

That hell that awaited us for our many sins, he poured upon himself willingly for his most prized possession. Oh, dear brethren, as God treasured hidden ones, we are hidden by a covering of his blood.

It's like the Passover as we see in the Old Testament. It's what the Passover lamb was looking ahead to, what he was pointing to. When the angel of the Lord was sent to bring death upon the firstborn of all those who were in Egypt, he would pass by and not kill anyone in the house which had the blood on the door, those homes that were covered by the blood.

And you know, friends, in that time, I'm sure many of the Israelites probably had weak faith. Many of them probably struggled with many sins.

[23 : 30] But we find that the reason why the angel of the Lord doesn't smite them is not because they had a great, bold faith. It's not because they were seen to be sinless, but it is only because there was blood on the door.

Friends, we are forgiven, not for any efforts we make on our own, not for any great acts of faith, but only by the blood of Jesus Christ are we covered in the sight of God.

As the late Jonathan Edwards said, you contribute nothing to your salvation except the sin that made it necessary.

Nothing except the sin that made it necessary. By his blood, through the blood of the Son, we find forgiveness. We find ourselves under the shadow of his wing, hidden from any harm that may befall us.

If we continued to sing our opening psalm, we would have sung there, no ill, that no plague shall near thy dwelling come, no ill shall thee befall, for thee to keep in all thy ways his angels charge, he shall.

[24 : 48] Hidden from all harm, forgiven and covered by his blood. We are cleansed and covered by his blood.

We are also cleansed with water, I mentioned at the start, how we are hidden as it were in Christ's side, where both blood and water poured out.

This water can show us the water which Christ said when he said, whoever drinks of that water, I will give him, sorry, whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

In Christ we have new life, we are given a new identity, and oh how much the world today, in a world filled with such confusion and such lies, struggles with identity.

Beloved of God, as God's treasured ones, our identity is in Christ. Our identity is not in ourselves. When we come to faith, our past self is dead.

[26 : 02] Our sins do not define us. we are a new creature, a new creation. Is that not what St. Paul said in our New Testament reading, in Colossians chapter 3, but we read there, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Our old selves have died. Those sins which severed our communion with God have now been hidden and thrown into the sea of his forgetfulness, has given us.

He has been! He has removed in his love all our iniquity.

All our iniquity, brothers and sisters, those very regrettable sins of our youth and of our past, God has removed in his love. love. Those present darling sins that we struggle with today, God has removed in his love.

Those sins that we shall commit in the future, for there is none that sins not, God has removed in his love for God's treasured hidden ones.

[27 : 19] In Christ we have a covering, and if we have been covered, friends, by he who is the light of the world, should we not also let our light so shine before men, that others may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Let our light shine in our homes, in our workplaces, in our communities, that they may see our good works, good works that we do not to get saved, but because we are saved, and that they might see him who is the light of the world, oh, that they would see him, and that they would honour, and praise him, for he is worthy of all glory, honour, and praise, friends.

We, as God's treasured hidden ones, friends, should we not be encouraged, and motivated, to serve, and to live, for him, who is our great, sovereign Lord, and who has done all things necessary for our salvation.

we have been reserved in Christ, chosen in him before the foundation of the world. We have been hidden by a covering of his blood.

And lastly, friends, very briefly, moving on to a third and final heading, we are protected. To Safan also means we are protected.

[28 : 50] You know, this word, Safan, is the same word used for when Moses' family hid him. They hid him because the Pharaoh saw that the Israelites were growing in might and in number.

And so the Pharaoh made a decree. He made a decree that all the baby boys of Israel should be murdered. But Moses' family chose rather to serve God than men, and they hid him.

they hid him to try and stop the Pharaohs from killing them. And this same Moses, who was hidden by his parents, he was one who could not be overcome by the Egyptians, but rather he was the one who led the children of Israel out of Egypt, out of the land of bondage, and even through the Red Sea.

he was one who brought them out of bondage, out of slavery. Just as Moses was protected from being murdered by the evil one, so we too in Christ, as God's treasured hidden ones, are protected from leaving Christ.

Or perhaps I should say that we are protected from Christ leaving us, because it is him who works in us. This is often a worry that some people have.

[30 : 27] In fact, there are some those, perhaps they may be here tonight, that don't want to profess their faith in the fear that in the future they might fall away.

They're scared that they might bring shame upon the name of Christ, and so they refuse to profess faith. Oh, friends, we do not persevere in the faith because of our own efforts or because of anything we do.

We only persevere in the faith because he which began a good work in us will bring it to completion. He produces in us, he performs in us, he works in us.

It is Christ who said, I give them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand, no one. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

But we are secure in the hands of Christ and of the Father. There is none who is able to snatch us out, friends. As one writer of old said, we are secure, not because we hold tightly to Jesus, but because he holds tightly to us.

[31 : 51] He who called you is faithful friends. He will lead you by the hand until in Zion you appear before the Lord at length.

As well as saphan being the word used for how Moses was hidden. It's also the same word used for when the prostitute Rahab hid the spies.

She hid them and their lives were preserved. And then the children of Israel eventually went on to conquer and enter into the promised land, bringing Rahab and all who were found in her household with them.

In like manner then, we as God's treasured ones, as we journey this wilderness of life, going from strength to strength until we reach the promised land of glory.

We are protected from the Lord, from the enemies who seek for our eternal life. Christ has conquered all the enemies, friends, even death itself.

[32 : 59] O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, says the Apostle Paul.

In Christ, friends, we are protected. The Pharaohs, they cannot take us away. The Lord provides a way for us out of Egypt, the land of bondage, and he also provides a way for us through the waters of judgment.

You'll remember as the children of Israel were exiting the land of Egypt, how the Egyptians followed them, they pursued them, they were going to take possession of them, they were going to destroy them, but the Lord provided a way for the Israelites to walk through the Red Sea.

And what happened to the Egyptians, friends? What happened to the Pharaohs? What happened to the enemies of God? Well, the waters closed in and they perished. They were consumed by the waters of God's judgment, but not his people, friends, not his treasured ones.

As God's hidden ones, he also provides a way for us to enter into the promised land, since he has conquered over all of his enemies. He has nobody else to face.

[34 : 19] He has faced them all and he has conquered them all, and so he will lead us to the promised land. God's God's people, his treasured ones, his hidden ones, his most prized possession.

And as the enemy has been trying to find these hidden ones of God, he saw that he could not find them.

He couldn't find where they were hidden. And then he began to try through his temptations and flew his influences to cause these people to no longer be God's most treasured possession, his most prized possession, to instead be his own possession, the enemy's possession.

But he could not, friends. And he continues today, trying to cause doubt and deception to deceive even the elect, trying to prevent them from getting into glory.

But friends, he cannot. Our salvation is secure in Christ. We have been reserved, we have been covered, and we were and we are protected from any harm that may prevent us from entering into glory.

[35 : 52] We are God's hidden ones, God's treasured ones. As we close tonight, friends, I want to ask you a question. question, how does God view you?

How does God view you? We are often asked the question, what do you think about God? Or what do you think about Jesus Christ?

But how is it that the Lord views you? Can you say with one of old, I am my beloved, it, and my beloved is mine?

Can you say that despite your many shortcomings, despite your inability to do any good, despite your utter pollution in sin and in misery, that you are God's treasured, hidden one.

One he has reserved, one he has covered, and one he protects. You can know, friends, you can know you have eternal life by believing on the name of the Son of God.

[37 : 07] You can be in awe and wonder at his marvelous grace, grace which brought us from darkness into his most marvelous light.

How could we not but turn to him, friends? How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? God has revealed through his word that Christ has done everything necessary for us.

Christ is enough. May the Lord be pleased to show these truths to you. I may be pleased to bless our meditations.

Amen. Let us conclude by singing to God's praise. In Sing Psalms and in Psalm 31. This is on page 37 of the blue psalm books.

Psalm 31 we shall sing from verse 19 to the verse 24 to the end. The tune is rocking him. psalm.

[38 : 21] In this psalm, the psalmist after acknowledging God's goodness to himself and to others, he encourages himself and others to firmly trust in the Lord.

And that is indeed what we are to do also. We all have a duty here tonight as you hear the word of God to trust in the Lord.

We shall sing from verse 19. Your goodness, Lord, is very great, prepared for those who fear your name. You show your goodness openly to all who your protection claim.

Your presence hides and shelters them from those who plot to take their life, as we considered in the sermon. And in your tent you keep them safe from evil tongues that stir up strife.

The Lord be praised because he showed the wonder of his love to me when in a city I was trapped, surrounded by the enemy. In my alarm I rashly said that I was hidden from your eyes.

[39 : 22] But when I called to you for help in grace you listened to my cries. O love the Lord all you his saints, the faithful will be kept by God, but he will give the proud their true.

Be strong, take heart, hope in the Lord. And that is indeed what we are to do, friends. Be strong, take heart, hope in the Lord.

We shall stand with Abel as we sing these verses of Psalm 31 19 to the end to God's praise. God's praise.

Prepare for those who hear your name, to show your goodness openly, to honor your protection name.

Good presence hides such shelters men, from those who fought to take their life, and in your hand you gave them safe, from evil times that stir us try.

[41 : 10] Our Lord be praised because he showed the wonder of his love to me.

When in a city I was not surrounded by the enemy, and I alone I must be said that I was hidden from your eyes, but when I call to you for help, in grace you listen to my kind.

O love the Lord, all you best saints, the faithful wealth he kept by God, but he will give a brother who dares you, his strong take heart, open in the Lord.

Let us conclude with a word of prayer. Our gracious Father, we give thanks that thou indeed has a most prized possession, and we give thanks that thou has been pleased to reserve us, to cover us, and to protect us.

And so help us then, as we have just sung, to be strong, to take heart, and to hope in the Lord. To hope in thee, for there is plenteous redemption, ever found in him whom thou hast given, to be our surety.

[43 : 37] And so be pleased to bless our meditations here tonight, be pleased to! go forth with thy blessing with us, going before us in the week that lies ahead, and be pleased to forgive anything that was said amiss, and take us to our homes in safety, and all this we ask in Christ's name, and for his sake, Amen.

Thank you.