God Loves Me Because of Who He Is | Psalm 4

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[0:00] Take your Bibles if you would and open them to the book of Psalms, chapter 4. I have to say that's some of my favorite singing if you'd like to know. Psalm chapter 4. Thank you, Steve, for all that.

Psalm chapter 4. What do you worry about? What keeps you up at night? What causes you to not get a good night's sleep? What are you going through right now?

The Psalms are truth-filled, but they're emotion-filled. And David is in big trouble as he writes Psalm 4. He's the king of Israel. He's lost everything.

He has been run out of his country, out of his palace. His own son has taken over the palace, and his own son is trying to destroy his dad. And David is at the end of his rope in a lot of ways.

But he ends the chapter, Psalm 4, he ends it saying this. I'll lay me down in peace. And sleep. Because thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.

[1:05] Not my soldiers. Not my strength. Not my palace walls. Not all my defenses. It's Jesus. And Jesus only. David's on the run from Absalom.

You remember Absalom is his son. David had sinned with Bathsheba. And he had killed Uriah. He's committed adultery. He's tried to hide his sin. The man of God has shown up and said to him, you have sinned.

And God's going to deal with your sin. Now, God doesn't quit loving him. God doesn't throw him away. And God doesn't take his salvation away. God just says, I'm going to whip your fanny.

You're going to find out that you do not, as a believer who belongs to Jesus, you do not sin and get away with it. He said, there's going to be a sword in your house. Your family's going to start fighting amongst themselves.

There's going to be death in your family. And so, it wasn't long until one of the brothers wanted to see one of the sisters. You know, they're half sisters. Because if you don't honor marriage like you ought to, one man married to one woman for one lifetime should get one amen out of this group.

[2:12] One man married to one woman for one lifetime. And if you don't honor that, you've got trouble. Well, David was never supposed to have more than one wife, but he's got dozens of them

And he's got dozens of them because that's what worldly kings do. And so, now he's got children. And his children are half brothers to his children. Because they've got the same daddy and they've got different mamas.

And Amnon wants to sleep with Tamar. And Tamar, obviously, is not going to do that. And so, Amnon rapes his sister. And then dad doesn't do anything about it because he's become a soft dad.

And sometimes you think that not disciplining is love, but not disciplining is actually a lack of love. The Bible even says you hate your children if you don't discipline them.

That probably made you mad at me, but I didn't say it. It's just what the Bible says. It's another amen spot right there. Amen. And so, because he doesn't discipline Amnon, Absalom waits two years and nothing happens.

[3:11] And so, finally, Absalom plots to kill his brother Amnon and he kills him. And when he kills him, he runs away and there's a whole lot of story I'm skipping over. And now Absalom has finally gotten back into the decent graces with his dad.

He's at least welcomed back in the kingdom, though David and him aren't talking. And Absalom goes to the palace and he starts winning everybody's heart. As everybody comes up to the palace, Absalom says, you know, he's a busy man.

He doesn't have time for you, but I do. And I love you. And if he were a good king, he'd be doing more like me. And it's not long ago, everybody likes Absalom more than they like David. And the next thing you know, Absalom has a coup, a military coup, and he throws his dad out.

And his dad leaves with his soldiers, the few that remain loyal to him, and he runs from his own kingdom. And Absalom installs himself as the king of Israel. And now Absalom's the king of Israel.

And then to flaunt his power, he takes his dad's wives up on the roof and heads his way with them so that all the kingdom could see him in these tents doing what he shouldn't have never done.

But he did it just to spite his dad. He's got daddy issues, and they are really vibrant, and they're wild, and they're crazy. And David is on the run. And now, as David is on the run, Absalom needs to figure out, how can I establish my power?

And so he has these men that work for him, and they were his daddy's counselors, and some of them are his counselors. And they all begin to talk, and they're giving him conflicting advice. Ahithophel says, I want you to attack David right now.

Let's get our men and go get him. And Absalom said, boy, I like that. Let's go kill him. And so about that time, this other guy named Hushai steps up and says, whoa, now, whoa, whoa, whoa. In 2 Samuel 17, 7, he said, now, that's not really the best advice for right now.

He said, your dad's on the run. And I don't think that'd be the best advice in 1780. He said, well, I mean, you do know how your dad is. You didn't build a kingdom your dad did.

You didn't whip a giant your dad did. You haven't won any battles your dad has. Your dad's a great warrior, and, I mean, you're just a pup. You ain't never done anything anyway. Your dad's done all this.

[5:24] And he said, if you go out there, David and his men, man, they're upset right now. They are chafed. That's the Bible word. They're chafed. That means like, buddy, they got a burr under their saddle.

They are ready to, they are mad, and they want to fight. And you know your daddy, he's a man of war, and he won't be hanging out with his people. Because as a general, they'll have him hidden somewhere.

And when you go to attack, his men will rise up, and they'll kill you. And the world will go through Twitter all across the nation how David's men defeated you in the first battle. And then when that happens, everybody will start following David again.

And so Hussi suggests, won't you get more soldiers, and let's wait. And what Absalom has no idea is that the best laid plans of men on this planet, God's still in charge.

And Absalom was not supposed to be where he was, and David was supposed to be there. And God's going to orchestrate some things. So God's been making Absalom's men accept the advice that would protect David.

David, in 2 Samuel 17, verse 14, the Bible says, And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, Well, the counsel of Hushai is better than the counsel of Atheophel. For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Atheophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom.

God said, Absalom, you're not getting away with this. David's my man, and though I'm spanking him, I'm not destroying him. Though I'm disciplining him, I'm not ending him. And so God's going to take care of Absalom.

Hushai is a loyal servant to David. So he calls some of his guys over, and he says, Hey, look, guys, you need to run and tell David what I just said, because they need to know to hide David and act like what I said.

True, because, you know, I've just been saying that. And that's 2 Samuel 17, 15, and 16. So Atheophel, when he sees that his advice isn't heeded, he goes out and gets his household in order, and then he killed himself.

He hung himself and died and was buried. So David got his army together and asked his men, Now, guys, I know we're going to win, because even in the darkest trial I'm ever in, I know I'm God's man.

[7:33] And I know God's with me, and I know I'm going to win, so don't kill my son Absalom. But Joab will murder Absalom anyway. Sin has great consequences.

There's a lot of great truths in this story. And you say, well, I don't really care about all this battle over in Israel. What's that got to do with me? It's got a lot to do with you. If you'll read with me in Psalm 4 and verse 3, this verse right here will bring it right to you.

The Bible says, Know that the Lord has set apart him that's godly for himself. How many of you in this room are godly? Say amen. Now, you're a little hesitant on saying that, because you're like, well, I ain't sure how godly I am.

You ain't godly because of what you do. You're godly because he made you godly. You see, you were on your way to hell, and you were ungodly. You were ungodly, and you deserved to go to hell, but Jesus saved you and made you his.

And so you're a blood-washed sinner, and you are godly by grace. Now, I'm going to ask it again. How many godly people we got in this room say amen? Well, I'm godly. You say, well, I don't feel all that godly.

[8:37] I didn't say you felt it. It's not about what you feel. It's about what's true. Amen? It's about knowing what the truth is. And so here's a great verse for you. He says, the Lord has set apart him that's godly for himself.

The Lord will hear. And here's what David knows. Man, I messed up. I should have never slept with Bathsheba. And when I did, I should have confessed it.

But I didn't. And then I should have never killed Uriah. But I did. And I guess God hates me. He never thought that.

He knew something you need to learn. He knew God doesn't love me because of what I do. God loves me because of who he is. God doesn't love me because of what I do.

God loves me because of who he is. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believed in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. God committed his love toward us, and while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

[9:40] For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It's a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. So while David has done wrong, David knows one thing.

He loves me. I want you to know this morning, you may be suffering consequences for something you did wrong. I don't think you committed the sins that David did.

You know, you haven't committed adultery and killed a guy probably. Might have committed adultery. I doubt you killed anybody. And you're kind of like, but I think God doesn't like me anymore because I really messed up.

Well, here's a word of truth for you. You were messed up when he saved you. He didn't save you because you was good.

He didn't look down and say, well, that's a good one there. I think I'll take that into heaven. That one right there, he's really good. He looked down and said, boy, he's sorry. If anybody deserves to go to hell, it's him. But I died for him. I'll save him, Phil.

[10:40] Trust me. Can I get an amen right there? So David's in trouble. And maybe you're in trouble. Well, maybe, I don't know, it's financial trouble. Or maybe it's a health issue.

Or maybe it's a marriage issue. Or maybe it's just emotional problems. And you're just kind of like dealing with a lot of stuff in your life. And you're wondering, what's God going to do?

This is a great psalm for you. David, in the middle of turmoil. I need to remind you. Man. You know, I got this bed at my house.

I just, I mean, I love my bed. I mean, when I go in my bedroom, we pull those curtains together. The light doesn't come in. We, I let it cool down to 65 degrees in the wintertime.

I get under enough cover. It takes a crane to lift it all so I can turn. And I just, heaven. I'm sure David, I sleep in a king-sized bed.

[11:36] Whatever bed King David slept in was a king-sized bed. Amen. Because he was a king. But now he's on the ground. On the run. And now people want to kill him.

And now if there's anything at all in David's mind, it's like, good night. The army, my own army is coming after me. My men are going to kill me. My life is over.

That's not what David thinks. The beauty of it is David thinks this. God hears my prayers. We'll take you through it in a second. But he goes, God hears my prayers. Did you know you serve a God who hears your prayers?

He has heard them in the past. And he still hears your prayers. And you can pray, even though you've messed up in the middle of all your junk, he still hears your prayers.

Amen. And then when David prayed it, he had to talk to himself. He had to say, now hush, heart. Hush. You're beating crazy. And you're beating wild. And you're scared.

[12:36] I have to commune with my heart and say, hush. Calm down and trust God. Calm down and trust God. There's every reason to be afraid, David. But think truth, David.

Not feelings. And then David says, so I laid me down and slept. You ever gone to bed and couldn't sleep?

That's a miserable feeling, isn't it? Tossing and turning. And all you can think about is all your problems. And if you ever do drowse off into sleep, it seems like your problems come marching at you like soldiers.

Let's go through this psalm. This is a great thing for you. Number one. David said, God's helped me in the past, so I know he'll do it again. How many of you have experienced God answering your prayer in the past?

Say amen. I mean, you've been in trouble. And you needed him. And I'm not talking about a good feeling. I'm talking about you prayed and something happened. And you were like, wow. God just answered prayer.

[13:33] If that's ever happened, you say amen. Look at what David says. For one, hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness. I could take forever here, but you do notice that God, he knows his righteousness is from his God.

It's not his. Underline. God of my righteousness. He says, you have enlarged me when I was in distress. You have helped me before when I was in trouble. You have helped me before.

The one thing about being a Christian is every time he helps you, you're like, huh. I saw it once and I'm seeing it again. When I was in distress, have mercy upon me and hear my prayer.

Now, God, I don't deserve it. I'm going to ask you to hear my prayer. And God hears his prayer. Then after God, after David talks to God, he says, God, I need mercy.

The truth is, every time God ever answers your prayers, it's mercy. If you ever think you get to go to God and say, God, you owe me. You just started talking like a fool. You just started talking like a dingbat.

[14:41] God doesn't owe us anything. If we got what we owed, we'd all go to hell. If we got what we owed, we'd all be dead already. If we got what we owed, what we were owed. But that's not what happened. He said, God, in mercy, would you hear my prayer?

Then when David gets through talking to that, I don't know if he says this out loud. I don't know who he says it to. But now he starts talking to his critics and his enemies. Look at verse 2. Oh, sons of men, how long will you turn my glory into shame?

How long will you try to mock me? I'm King David. I'm a man after God's own heart. I'm the guy that sits on the throne of Israel. How long will you love what's worthless and empty?

How long will you trust lies and seek after lies? They have no respect for David now. But David knows this. Though men don't love me, men do not love me and men do not believe in me, God does love me.

That's a good place to get to. These beautiful young people, they just sang a song, Jesus, let it only be Jesus.

[15:53] And here's where David is. It's only Jesus. It's only Jesus. They see David's weakness as shame while David sees his weakness as needing God.

They love things that have no value. They love the lies that the devil tells. They seek after things that the devil says. But David knows something special.

Look with me, if you would, at verse 3. I have preached entire messages on this verse. And so I would like to just take about an hour or two here, but I won't do that.

But this verse right here changed my life. You see, I've always been trying to measure up. Live right. Live clean enough.

Always be good enough. Maybe God would love me if I was right. If I gave enough, prayed enough, read my Bible enough, won enough people to Christ. And I put so much pressure on me.

[16:52] Now, the guy's doing the talking here. He's on the run because of the consequences of his sin. Do you understand that? He is running because of the consequences of his sin.

But he understands the truth that has taken me an entire lifetime to learn. He understood that God loved him. And no matter where he was or what was happening, God would hear his prayer.

The Lord has set apart him that's godly for himself. When he saved you, he pulled you to himself and said, you are very special to me.

You don't have to bring many prizes. You don't have to do a bunch of stuff. I made you godly. I love you. I have been a dad for 44 years.

And I've had problems with my children, just to be honest with you. They didn't always do right. They didn't always do what they ought to do. They disappointed me.

[18:00] They hurt me. Thank God they didn't run me out of my kingdom and send an army to kill me. Praise the Lord for that one. Amen. I'm one up on old David. I'll tell you something.

I've loved my kids. I don't really love them. I adore them. I think any daddy in this room understands that. Sometimes you daddies are just like me. You're just too dumb to say it. I mean, Betty just gushes and cries all the time.

Me, I'm just like, I love you. Betty's sitting there talking to them last night. And she said, I just want to say thank you. And I'm about to cry. And I'm like, she can program it.

She says, I'm fixing to cry. I'm like, well, what are you fixing to cry for? If you already know you're going to cry, just don't cry. You know what God does? He looks down and says, I love you. You belong to me.

I set you apart for me. Hey, you got a special time. You can talk to me. You know, my office is kind of the center of activity for all the smaller children because they know where there's a drawer that's full of suckers.

[19:05] And they don't think they have to knock. And they don't think they have to do anything. They think they just have a right to come in there. And when people say something to them, I just say, let them come in.

I'm the grand pastor. Not granddaddy, grand pastor. Amen. But the other day, the door was locked. And Abby was knocking on the door. And I was doing something.

And Abby's my granddaughter. She's six now. So finally, I said, just open the door and see what she wants. She said, granddaddy, these kids are wanting some suckers. I think we need to come in. I said, well, bring them on in.

You see, I have set aside Abby for myself. And I will hear. And if I'm that granddaddy, what do you think about your God? I know you're hurting this morning. I know you're on the run.

I know the devil's got you against the wall. I know the health issues are beating you alive. I know you've been hurt. I know your life's been a mess. I know you feel like nobody loves you. But he set you apart for himself.

[20:00] Say amen. He loves you. And he said, let him call and I'll hear. Now, he had to remind himself of that. Look at verse 4 if you would. Even if you're in shock with the way others treat you, you don't need to fall into sin.

Look at verse 4. Stand in awe and sin not. Like right now, you're like, I cannot believe what these idiots are doing to me. I am King David.

No, no. Hush, David. Don't get all upset. Just remember, it's not about who you are. It's about who I am. That's what the Father says. Say amen right there. He said, so David, go talk to yourself while you're in bed.

Look at that. You need to understand that in your Bible. Commune with your own heart upon your bed. And be still. You're supposed to go lay down and wait on God.

You're supposed to think about him all day long. But I want you to notice here, we're supposed to talk to ourselves. And sometimes I'm laying there and everything is going wrong and things have happened in my life.

[21:05] And, you know, I don't know if you saw it. It was making the rounds on Facebook. It's a picture of the pastor, the shepherd. He's leading his sheep. And the sheep attack him and knock him down.

And they run all over him. And then he starts setting back up. And here comes a deacon. I mean a sheep. It just plasters him one more time. I don't usually think about you.

Sometimes I do about the mysteries I work with. But you know what? When you're under attack, we're all under attack. Everybody in this room is dealing with your own stuff. Come on. We'll commune with your heart.

You lay down in your bed and you say to yourself, let me tell the truth about my God. Let me think about who he is and what he says. Think on these things.

Philippians chapter 4 and verse 8. What I want to do is talk to myself. I want to remind myself that he set apart the godly for himself. I want to remind myself that in the past he answered my prayers.

[22:05] I want to remind myself that he never made me holy because I was good. He knew when he saved me, he saved a messed up guy. Somewhere along the way you get this real haughty and better than other people idea.

You got saved out of filth. And you forget that and all of a sudden you start walking around like, look how I changed my life. And the God of heaven is looking down and saying, you didn't do much, but I'm going to fix you up. Say amen. I changed you.

So David, I don't know what David's going on there. I mean, I just got to imagine and I challenge you to imagine with me if you would. David's there and there's soldiers sitting around him and probably they did set him up some kind of bed.

He's the king and they got him sitting in some kind of bed. Maybe got him in a tent. Maybe he's in a cave and there's soldiers all around him. But I mean, he's only got a very small number of his soldiers. And here's what he could be thinking.

He's going to kill me any minute now. My son's coming and my soldiers are coming. They're going to cut my head off. They're going to make fun of me in front of everybody. They're going to, he's already slept with my wives. He's going to end my life.

[23:06] It's all over. And he could have talked himself into killing himself. One guy already did that in the story. But instead, old David laid down and goes, I need to think about my God. I need to commune with myself.

That's why you memorize truth. That's why you memorize Bible verses. That's why you fill your heart up with truth. So you can commune. There's an accuser of the brethren that would like to destroy you.

After you talk to yourself, verse 5, you offer sacrifices of righteousness. And you put your trust in God. So if you could write something down, write this down.

Do right. Do right. Now listen to me. You know what happens when your life falls apart? You quit on God. You know what you do when your life falls apart?

Instead of running towards God, you run away from God. Instead of trying to seek him, you hide from him. And try to do right, you do wrong. But if you'd sit down over here and say, I need to think this thing through.

[24:08] I know that he which has begun a good work in me will fulfill it. I know that all things work together for good to them that love God and are called according to his purpose. He has predestined me to be conformed to the image of his son.

I know that God's at work in my life. The worst day of my life. I had to apologize to the churches and I had to apologize to the mission here in the States.

I had to apologize to my home church because my family wasn't doing right. But I got alone and I communed with myself. And on Sunday I preached a message entitled, I Will Win in This Too.

Because we always win. On the day I found out I had cancer and I studied the internet so I knew I was going to die. Seven years ago.

I've been dead seven years. Y'all just haven't put me in the grave yet. And that first day, man, I didn't handle it real good. Then I had to do some communion. I had to get a hold of truth. So I'm calling on you to do tonight.

[25:14] Put your trust in the Lord. See, David's not saying, my army. I mean, my own children are trying to kill me. My own children are trying to kill me.

Verse six. There are many, many that say, who will show us any good? There's no way out of this. Everybody's like, there's no solution here. There's no answer here.

We're in trouble and there's nobody can help now. God, only you. Would you please let your face shine on us? But David knew something.

Verse seven. That was put gladness in my heart. More than when I got a big pay raise. More than when I sold my business and made a truckload of money.

You put joy in my heart. The first church I was in, I made a lot of financial mistakes. Church was in financial trouble and I was living without a salary for a couple of years.

[26:19] My wife didn't have a job. I didn't have a job. It was strictly a God answering prayer kind of thing in my life. One night I got down. One afternoon I was in my office and I had a couch in my office.

And I got down and just prayed at that couch and I said, God, I said, I guess I'm just going to have to quit. This thing ain't working out. I don't know what's going on here.

Things are a mess. I think I'll just quit. I don't know what I'm going to do. God, I can't pay the bills. I'm embarrassed and the church can't pay its bills and I can't pay my bills. And my wife thinks I'm a man of God and the church thinks I'm a man of God.

Give up. I think I'll just quit. I'm laying there. I'm on my knees, kind of laid up on the couch. I thought he moved in.

It was like he came right in the room. It was like he put his arm around me. And it was like he said, it's all going to be okay, buddy. You'll just keep trusting me. I can remember sitting there going, I don't know why I'm feeling better.

[27:21] There's no logical reason. I'm still on my knees in the same place I was when I was ready to quit. All of a sudden I realized somehow he's going to take care of this. Somehow he's going to come through. And I got up and I said, I don't know what he's going to do, but I'm pretty sure he just told me he's going to take care of it.

I walked downstairs. And as I walked by, my secretary was a volunteer secretary. She's second floor all the way to the front so she could catch all the people coming in. And I got there and she said, hey, people have been putting money in your box today.

You got money. I know y'all thought it said you got mail. She said, you got money. And I reached in there and got all this money. My bills were taken care of and God had come through.

And just a few days later, all the money was needed to pay the bills were taken care of. God put gladness. He wants you to get alone with him and wait on him. He wants you to get alone and wait on him.

He wants you to just prostrate yourself. I mean, throw yourself on your face. I mean, get down and realize, man, I can't do anything. And just talk to God and talk to yourself and believe God and do what's right.

[28:25] I know you're in the middle of a mess. I know it seems like you should have no peace. But real peace isn't what you have when the sun's shining. Real peace isn't what you have when everything's going good.

Real peace. A peace that passes understanding is what you have because you know God's with you when there's no reason to know that. And he is with you.

And so David ends the chapter with, well, I think I'll go to bed. Now, you don't go to bed. In these circumstances, you don't go to bed.

You pace the floor. In these circumstances, you're trying to figure a way out to solve your problem. You're over there saying, hey, send this letter over to that king and see if you'll come help me fight. Do we have any treasure hidden anywhere?

We've got to pay some bills. We've got to solve this problem. I need something to do here. We've got to solve this problem. I mean, it's all on me. You know how you feel. Come on, be honest. Y'all never admit that's how you feel.

[29:22] That's how I feel. And David's sitting around with his boys. I don't know. Is it 9 o'clock, 10 o'clock at night? And they're all like nervous and torn up. And they're all like, well, you know, David's going to get killed.

We're all going to get killed. We're all dead meat. And David says, well, I think I'll just turn in. You just going to go to bed? Yeah. I think I'll just go lay down in peace and sleep.

Because it ain't you boys going to protect me tonight. It's my God. I don't know what you're going through. But the doctors and the lawyers and the politicians and the preachers, none of them have the answer.

But he does. He has set apart the godly for himself. You're special. He loves you. And he cares about you.

And he says, hey, you can knock on the door anytime you want. Bring your friends in and get some suckers if you want. Because you're special to me. And that's what our God's doing. I don't know what you're going through.

[30 : 26] I just preach them through the Bible. He put it in there. And I don't think you think it'll happen. And somebody in this room, you're hurting. And you need to know something today. He heard you the last time you prayed.

And he'll hear you this time. You need to know that. You need to know that while everybody else is making fun of you and laughing at you, verse 2, they're all making fun of you and laughing at you. You need to know this. Verse 3 is coming.

And in verse 3, God says, you're special to me. You're special to me. In verse 3, he set the godly apart. Verse 3, he set the godly apart for himself.

In verse 4, he said, so be astonished that I love you still. That's sweet. He loves you still. Talk to yourself.

Offer sacrifices. Be at the worship service. Put your trust in the Lord. Everybody else might be all worried about it. But God has put gladness in my heart.

[31:29] We leave here today with joy, not because I can preach, not because our kids can sing. Though I do think they can sing. We leave here because the Lord has done a work in us.

We leave here because we belong to him. And we have a joy. And so whatever it is you're going through, I know you're hurting. I hurt for you. I pray and I think about you and I wish there was some way I could take all your burdens off of you and put them on me.

But he already did that. He said, casting all your care on me. For I care for you. A little bit of a change in the verse, but that's how it reads.

1 Peter chapter 5, verse 7, I think. This morning, let's do right. Let's just throw our burdens on him.

Let's trust our God. I know you're hurting. I know somebody that set you aside and said you're special. This isn't a Joel Osteen message. That's straight out of Psalm chapter 4. You can read it yourself. He loves you.

[32:29] He loves you. He loves you.