

God is the Victory
(Psalms 18:1-27)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Psalm 18 is a psalm of David's praising God for the victories the Lord had brought to his life.
 - A. The same Psalm is found in 2 Samuel 22, with the same introduction.
 - i. Many believe this psalm should be placed between 2 Samuel 7 and 8 because David says he was rewarded because he was *righteous, keeping the ways, judgments, and statutes* of the Lord, which they say He would not have stated *after* his evil actions concerning Bathsheba.
 - ii. This may be so, although to accept this theory may cause us to ignore how God's grace, along with a *spirit dedicated, or rededicated*, to God and obedience, produces righteousness.
 - B. In any case, David praises God for providing his many victories—ultimately *military* victories.
 - i. Though we are not commissioned in Christ to fight military battles, Christians are soldiers of Christ and must fight for the Lord's cause.
 - ii. For most of us this is a *daily battle* because sin and temptation are so prevalent in this world, as are the physical, family, financial, and emotional battles we must face.
2. What I want us to gain today from a portion of this Psalm are two very important points:
 - A. *God* is the only one we can lean on to be truly *victorious* in this life.
 - B. If we *stay close to God*, being *faithful* in our hearts and lives, **God will provide victory!**
 - C. Let's look at four areas of our life where God alone can provide true victory for us.

BODY:

I. God is the victory over our weakness (18:1-3)

- A. David describes God for what He is to those who trust Him—their strength, rock, fortress, deliverer, shield, horn of salvation, and stronghold. He is **the** answer for our weaknesses!
 1. David knew this to be true because of the many victories God had brought him.
 - a. His language likely recalls the many times he felt *weak and vulnerable* as he fled from Saul, hiding in the rocky places, taking refuge in caves, the strongholds of his camps, etc.
 - b. In all this David confidently declares God to be the reason he was able to endure!
 2. No one likes feeling weak and vulnerable! Yet, weakness and vulnerability can have value in our lives if they lead us away from trusting in our own strength and leaning on God.
- B. David provides some insight into why God provided these victories in his times of *weakness*, which He will also do for us, if we will follow David and...
 1. **Love** the Lord (18:1 – “I will love You, Lord, my strength”).
 - a. Love is expressed in obedience (14:15 – “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”).
 - b. Yet, there should be an emotional attachment to God for the love he has shown us! (1 Jn. 3:1; 4:19 – “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!... ¹⁹ We love Him because He first loved us.”).
 2. **Trust, or take refuge**, in God (18:2 – “My God, my strength, in whom I will trust”).
 - a. We need to trust the Lord's strength and keep firmly in mind the deliverance He has *already provided* in our life that we might be confident of His help in the future!
 - b. David knew the Lord was the answer! Why not learn that lesson and have peace?
 3. **Call upon the Lord** to provide victory (18:3 – “I will **call upon the Lord**, who is worthy to be praised; **So shall I be saved from my enemies.**”).
 - a. Note the connection between **calling** on God's help and **being saved!**
 - b. God needs to be your first option in addressing life's battles!
 - c. Only God can provide the strength, foundation, and refuge to overcome **weakness!**

II. God is our victory over fear (18:4-6)

- A. David was often overwhelmed with fear because of the enemies he faced (18:4-5).

1. When Saul became insanely jealous, the Bible says Saul “was David’s enemy continually” (1 Sam. 18:29) and that for about *ten years*, “Saul sought him every day” (1 Sam. 23:14).
 2. No wonder David names his enemies as death, ungodliness (NKJV)/destruction (NASB, ESV), and Sheol/grave. These were the intended goals of Saul’s pursuit of David, not to mention others!
 - a. Death and destruction were often so near that David describes them as ropes/cords (NASB, ESV), (or pangs – NKJV), encompassing, surrounding, and engulfing him.
 - b. Ten long years of running! No wonder David knew fear!
- B. Yet, David finds himself in *great debt* to God, owing him his life, love, and praise, because God *heard his cries* in His heavenly temple (18:6)!
1. Although we haven’t been pursued by a murderous king, we face daily battles and troubles that cause us to fear.
 - a. The lengths we go to keep our families safe, the work and sacrifices we make to pay the bills, the amount of insurance we keep, the doctor bills, etc., all speak of the *frail nature* of our existence.
 - b. If that were not enough, Peter reminds us of the greater enemy ever stalking us (1 Pet. 5:8 – “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the **devil** walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”).
 2. Someone or something besides ourselves must be the answer to our fears. And, that answer is God who hears in His heavenly temple the voices and cries of His people in distress.
 - a. We need to be confident because God is watching out for us and listening for our call (1 Pet. 3:12 – “For the **eyes of the Lord are on the righteous**, and His **ears are open to their prayers**; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”).
 - b. Through God we can have the victory over the *fears* of life!

III. God is our victory over our enemies (18:7-19)

- A. In these verses David speaks of what happens when God heard his prayers and took up his cause.
- B. God became **angry** (18:7-8)!
 1. The distress, opposition, and persecution of His people cause anger in God, causing Him to breathe for smoke and devouring fire that rattles the earth’s foundations (18:7-8).
 2. For the wicked, it will truly be a “fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31)! They will not escape His wrath, and the righteous will be vindicated!
- C. God bows the heavens and *comes down* in His anger, using His control of nature itself to scatter and vanquish the foes of His people (18:9-15).
 1. He comes with a dark storm of destruction upon the foes of His people, scattering them!
 2. Though David was surrounded and overwhelmed by the floods of evil and death itself, God righteous wrathful storm routed them (18:13-15)!
- D. Then, the most amazing thing happens (18:16-19).
 1. God reaches down and plucks David from the engulfing floods, saving him (18:16-17).
 2. David, who had no strength in himself to withstand these onslaughts, knew the Lord was his support and leaned on him (18:18).
 - a. We all have something/someone we lean on—family, friends, position, our abilities.
 - b. But the only support that will never let us down is God.
 3. The Lord **delivered** David because God **delighted** in Him (18:19).
 - a. God can be counted on because He **delights** in His people!
 - i. The Lord has great pleasure in His people and *desires* us.
 - ii. Why a completely holy Creator does so is beyond me! And yet He does!
 - b. Why did God delight in David but not in his enemies? This leads us to our last section.

IV. God is our victory over sin (18:20-27)

- A. Though David sinned, as do we, God still rewarded David *according to his righteousness* and the moral *cleanness of his hands* (18:20-24). Two points are necessary to understand this:
1. First, righteous is *obedience*—the willingness to follow God’s commands and do what is right (18:21 – “I have kept the ways of the Lord”).
 - a. Ezekiel proves this (Ezek. 18:21-22 – “But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, **keeps all My statutes**, and **does what is lawful and right**, he shall surely live; he shall not die.²² None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; **because of the righteousness which he has done**, he shall live.”).
 - i. Note how “keeps all My statutes” and “does where is lawful and right” are the same as “the righteousness which he has done.”
 - ii. What David and other O.T. people did determined whether God viewed them as righteous.
 - b. Righteousness *in Christ* requires obedience as well!
 - i. Rom. 6:16 – “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of **obedience leading to righteousness?**”
 - ii. 1 Jn. 3:7 – “Little children, let no one deceive you. He who **practices righteousness** is **righteous**, just as He is righteous.”
 - c. So, God rewarded David with victory because he was seeking to do what was right! And we should not expect God to approach us any differently.
 2. Second, though David was *imperfect* in his obedience and righteousness, as are we, God did *not forsake him* because *David did not forsake God*.
 - a. Note how in 18:21 David said he had “not wickedly departed from my God” and in 18:22 that he “did not put away His statutes.”
 - b. The combination of David’s seeking to obey and refusal to give up on God resulted in him being “blameless” (18:23), or counted as *complete*, or *perfect* before God
 - i. Why? Because these are the ones who ultimate receive God’s *grace*.
 - ii. This is the formula the Holy Spirit reveals to us in Christ (1 Jn. 1:6-7 – “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.⁷ But if we **walk in the light** as **He is in the light**, we have fellowship with one another, and the **blood** of Jesus Christ His Son **cleanses us from all sin.**”).
 - c. So, who is it that God cleanses, that He makes truly righteous? Those who obey Him, who seek to live their lives in the light of God’s work, in obedience to God’s will!
- B. God responds in kind to mankind (18:25-27)
1. With those who show themselves...
 - a. **Merciful**/kind/pious (devout), God shows himself merciful/kind/pious (devout) (18:25a).
 - b. **Blameless** (integrity), God shows himself to be blameless (integrity) (18:25b).
 - c. **Pure** (purified/purged out sin), God shows himself to be pure (sinless)
 2. On the other hand, to the morally and spiritually **devious**, or **crooked**, God shows himself shrewd (NKJV), astute (NASB), or tortuous (ESV) (full of twists and turns – *Oxford Dictionary*)
 - a. The devious/crooked are those who have no faith, no confidence in God, and who wickedly *depart from God* and *cast His statutes from them!*
 - b. To them God is something altogether different, something shrewd, threatening, dangerous—a destroyer. Isn’t this what we see in the wicked around us?
 3. In the end we can rest assured of two important points: 1) that God saves the **humble** (afflicted, lowly), and 2) He brings down the **haughty** (18:27).

- a. What a blessing it is to know that when I **humbly** repent of my sin and turn to God in faith and obedience, He *forgives* me and *saves* me, and then *treats* me as though I am complete, as though that sin in my life never happened!
 - i. Why He is willing to show such grace and love to me is hard for me to understand.
 - ii. But I gratefully accept Jesus' words He wonderfully declared (John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”).
- b. But also, be very aware that the **haughty**, or those who refuse to humble themselves and obey God's word, will be brought down...eternally. You don't want to be on that side!
4. God is the victory over sin, and He rewards those who refuse to give up on Him, who refuse to walk away from His commandments.

CONCLUSION:

1. I hope you know in your life, not just in word but in truth, that God IS the VICTORY for the faithful over their weaknesses, fears, enemies, and sin itself.
2. Victory today is abundantly supplied in Jesus, who died and was raised from the dead unto glory to bring grace to you for your salvation.
3. But that grace calls upon you to make a choice, to decide what you will do today, right now, and for the rest of your live with Jesus and the gospel.
 - A. Will you call upon God today by putting your faith in Jesus, repenting of your sins, confessing your faith, and being baptized into Christ for salvation? (Acts 22:16 – “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”).
 - B. If you are a Christian and have cast away God's will and departed from his ways, will you call upon God in prayer and repentance, seeking His forgiveness and your restoration to His flock?
 - C. Will you respond today?