

Psalm 18

Psalm 18 has been a precious psalm to many of us over the last few years. The theme of the psalm can be seen at the end of the psalm: “Great deliverance giveth he to his king” (v. 50). Even when we cannot see how there could be deliverance, God always delivers his king and the king’s seed in him.

The theme of Psalm 18 is evident also in the first three verses of the psalm. “Thee will I love, O LORD, my strength...my rock, and he that doth to me deliverance afford: my God, my strength” (vss. 1–2 in the Scottish Metrical Version [SMV])—all of that speaks of the deliverance that God gives to his king. Let’s start by singing the first 17 verses...

In the next section we are going to sing, the psalmist explains why it is that God came to help him. This part of the psalm is impossible to understand unless we understand that this is Jesus’ psalm; that he sings it; and that when we sing it we are singing it with Jesus, about him. What Jesus speaks of in these next verses is the reward of righteousness. You have heard of the reward of grace. The reward of grace is really all of salvation, which God gives to you and to me not because of what we have done but because of his love. He gives that reward, that salvation, to us entirely graciously. But Psalm 18 speaks of the reward of righteousness, and that is the reward that is earned, the reward that is owed, the reward that one accomplishes for himself. That reward of righteousness is described in verse 19: “Because he took delight in me, he my deliv’rance wrought” (SMV). “According to my righteousness HE did me recompense, he me repaid according to my hands’ pure innocence. For I GOD’S ways kept, from my God did not turn wickedly. His judgments were before me, I his laws put not from me. Sincere before him was my heart, with him upright was I; and watchfully I kept myself from mine iniquity” (vv. 20–23, SMV). The psalmist explains all the good that he did, all the laws of God that he kept; and because of his keeping those laws, the psalmist receives the reward of righteousness. He receives salvation from God. The only one who could do that is Jesus Christ, so that when we sing this part of the psalm we are not singing about what our hands have done or what goodness is in us, but we are singing with our savior the words of his goodness. Let’s sing verses 18–27...

In the next verses the psalmist glories and rejoices in what God has done for him. “The Lord will light my candle..the LORD my God will make also my darkness to be light” (v. 28, SMV). Verse 29 is a precious one that many of us lived through together: “By thee through troops of men I break, and them discomfit all; and, by my God assisting me, I overleap a wall.” There is also the note in here of how God has made his psalmist a warrior: “My hands to war he taught, mine arms brake bows of steel in pieces” (v. 34, SMV). That is a foreshadowing of what is going to happen to the enemies, which we will sing in the next section. Now let’s sing through verse 35...

The next section of Psalm 18 speaks of the utter destruction of the enemies of God’s people. The spiritual reality of all things is that there is deliverance given to the church, so that we stand in wide places; we have peace with God; we have the joy of our salvation, as God by his king brings down the enemies. Let’s sing through verse 45...

Verse 46 is a very interesting verse. In the King James Version it begins, “The LORD liveth,” or, in the SMV, “God lives.” That is an oath. That is the oath formula throughout scripture: “As the Lord liveth, I will do this, or I will not do that.” So this is an oath that Jesus sings, he himself taking this oath on his lips that his rock is blessed and that the God of his health and salvation be praised. So we come to the glorious ending of the psalm, as the psalmist takes this oath of praise unto God and as he recaps what he has sung in the psalm. “God doth avenge me, and subdues the people under me. He saves me from mine

enemies; yea, thou hast lifted me above my foes; and from the man of violence set me free" (vv. 47–48, SMV). And the conclusion to that: "Therefore to thee will I give thanks the heathen folk among"—that's us—"and to thy name, O LORD, I will sing praises in a song" (v. 49, SMV). And then in verse 50 comes the theme of the whole song: deliverance to the king. Let's finish the psalm now by singing verses 46–50.