

# Psalm 18

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[ 0 : 00 ] And I'd like you to grab your Bibles and turn to the book of Psalms, to Psalm 18.

! And we've been taking them in order. We've covered the first 17 Psalms.

Now that's, of course, spread out over about six years, and so there's not a large concentration at any one time. But we try to come back to the Psalms occasionally so that we can pause in the midst of whatever it is that we're doing, so that we can hear from God, so that we can look at this great book of God-inspired songs of praise to the Lord and be motivated ourselves to be more fervent in our praise toward Him.

And so here we are capping off the end of 2017, and it's appropriate, as you'll see in a moment, that we would cover Psalm 18. Now this is a very long Psalm, and we'll cover all of the Psalm in the course of the sermon.

But here at the outset, I want to read the opening of the Psalm, the first three verses, and then I'm going to jump down to the end, to the last five verses of it, and I'd like you to stand with me as we read those verses.

[ 1 : 25 ] Starting in verse 1, David writes, Verse 46, The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock, and exalted be the God of my salvation, the God who gave me vengeance and subdued peoples under me, who rescued me from my enemies.

Yes, you exalted me above those who rose against me. You delivered me from the man of violence. For this I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations, and sing to your name.

Great salvation he brings to his king, and shows steadfast love to his anointed, to David and his offspring forever. Father, we thank you that your Spirit inspired David to write this song.

And we thank you that it is included for us in the Scriptures. And I pray this morning that you would show yourself faithful to us as we meditate on the Word together.

I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. You guys take a seat. You know, there are a lot of the Psalms that we don't really, we don't have a lot of background for.

[ 3 : 05 ] We don't know the historical circumstances, the settings, setting in which the Psalm was written. We're kind of left to just sort of conjecture, or we just sort of have to read the Psalm as if it's detached and doesn't have a whole lot of background other than sort of a vague, general background of ancient Israel.

But this particular Psalm, along with a number of others, has something, it's a superscription. It's an inscription at the beginning of the Psalm that functions almost like a title, but a fairly long title in this instance.

Sometimes these are short, but in this instance it's longer, and it gives us more information about the background of this particular Psalm. So if you'll look up in most of your English translations, this is written before the verses begin being numbered with verse 1.

And in here we read, to the choir master a psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who addressed the words of this psalm to the Lord on the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.

In the words he said, and the psalm follows. So we have some background, we have some sort of context that's given to us here for trying to understand this psalm. We know first of all that it was in fact written by David himself, which shouldn't be surprising.

[ 4 : 16 ] David wrote a number of the psalms. David was a great poet and a great songwriter and even a great musician. We know that as we read the account of his life. And so it's not surprising to us that he would write a psalm and that he would write a psalm like this of praise and thanksgiving to God for all that God has done for him.

But as you read through there, it reads as if initially this song was written to commemorate a particular moment in which God delivered David from his enemies.

Even Saul himself is named. But when you turn back to 2 Samuel, one of the books in which we find the account of David's life, what you realize very quickly is that this psalm was written not in response to any particular event in the life of David, but this psalm was actually written toward the end of David's life as he's looking back and reflecting upon not God's one-time deliverance of him, but God's faithfulness, God's repeated deliverance of David from all of his enemies throughout his life.

This same psalm is found in 2 Samuel chapter 22. In fact, if you want to hold your place here in Psalm 17, you can turn back to 2 Samuel chapter 22.

If you're using some of the Bibles we have scattered around in the chairs, you can turn to page 274. That'll get you there really quickly. But there in 2 Samuel, you find almost, but not quite, almost word for word what we find in the psalm that we're looking at this morning, Psalm 18.

[ 5 : 51 ] So we read here, verse 1, David spoke to the Lord the words of this song on the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. He said, and what follows for the rest of this chapter is largely what we find in the psalm that we're looking at this morning.

But then when you look at the beginning of chapter 23, we are told these are the last words of David, and then more words follow. In other words, what we have here getting toward the end of 2 Samuel is a collection of sayings and psalms from the hand of David near the end of his life.

So that what David is really writing here in Psalm 18 is a reflection upon God's continued faithfulness throughout his life.

Not just one moment when God swooped in and rescued David from a particular enemy, but God has shown Himself throughout the decades and throughout the years that David lived, not just while he was king, but even before becoming king, throughout those years that David lived, that God has shown Himself to be faithful and true and fulfilled all of His promises to David so that David knows now here at the end of his life that he has been able to count on God repeatedly over and over.

So it's appropriate that we would approach Psalm 18 now as we look back on the end of 2017.

Because when we come to the end of the year, we become reflective. Not just us, but just whenever you have sort of a seminal moment like the beginning of a year, the end of a year, you have those markers in time, you tend to look back and think about the things that have happened since the last of those time markers came along.

[ 7 : 31 ] And it's not just us, everybody does this, our culture does this, and you can sort of take the pulse of a culture by the things that they want to look back on. So that I've seen articles or news reports on things like all the, what are the biggest political scandals of 2017?

Or the biggest celebrity breakups of 2017? You can really sort of see the values of a culture and the things that they mark and look back on throughout the course of a year in their lives.

Well, David, as he looks back not upon one year, but upon his entire life now, David looks back and he focuses upon God's faithfulness to him in all of the trying circumstances of his life.

But probably the first thing that we need to take note of as we look at this psalm is the fact that though David is praising God because God always delivers him, because God always rescues him and saves him, we need to remember that David was often in need of rescue.

David was often in need of deliverance. So let's take a look at the psalm itself. Let's just jump down to verse 4. And picture in your minds what sort of circumstances would cause David to use this kind of language.

[ 8 : 45 ] He says, The cords of death encompassed me. The torrents of destruction assailed me. The cords of Sheol entangled me.

The snares of death confronted me. And then he tells us, In my distress I called upon the Lord. To my God I cried for help. From His temple He heard my voice, and my cry to Him reached His ears. In other words, David was desperate. And not just in a moment. Repeatedly throughout his life, David faced situations and circumstances in which he found himself desperate.

He found himself facing what at least appeared externally to be a hopeless situation. And it was in those moments that he cried out to God. So terrible were some of these moments that he describes them as having the cords of death wrapped around him.

Or the cords of the grave or Sheol around him. He feels as if life has nearly come to an end. If you know the life of David very well, you can probably imagine some of the places and times in which he

would have felt this way.

[ 9 : 52 ] Perhaps while he was in a sort of exile, out in the wilderness, as King Saul was chasing him and threatening his life. And that happened on multiple occasions.

The relationship between David and Saul is weird. It's just strange. Because one day Saul is wanting David to come and sing to him. And he loves David. And the next day he's trying to stab him through the spear.

I mean, Saul is just out of his gourd. And David is constantly having to wrestle with this reality that he wants to serve the king. But he himself has also been called to be a king.

And therefore the king hates his guts. And so sometimes he's in good with King Saul. But other times he's on the run for his life from King Saul. And there are multiple times where David finds himself in fear for his life, destitute and feeling alone, trying to get away from King Saul.

And yet in each of those circumstances, God was faithful. God delivered David. Or you might imagine later on in David's life, after he had for some time been reigning as king from Jerusalem, David's own son rose up against him and successfully staged a coup and drove David out of the capital city of Jerusalem.

[ 11 : 03 ] And there David is once again, now an older man, but now once again out in the wilderness, on the run from his life from an illegitimate king. Over and over in David's life, he's had these moments.

There have been times when he has lost children, both infants and adult grown children. There were times when he feared for his own life, feared for the lives of his family. There were times when he lost some of his most trusted confidants and soldiers and leaders within his army whom he depended upon.

Over and over, David faces distressing situations. And now as he looks back over those situations in his life, he looks and he says, it felt like things were over.

It felt as if death had come upon me and death was there for me. And yet in those times, I called out to God. I cried out to him for help.

And I hope that when we look back on whether it's just one year or a decade of our lives, or if we, like David, look back over the whole of our lives, I hope that we are able to look back and not pretend that we haven't had difficult days, difficult years, difficult periods in our life.

[ 12 : 14 ] Let's not pretend that those things don't happen and that they don't exist. Or looking forward, let's not pretend that we aren't going to have difficult days ahead. Let's not pretend that those aren't there, but acknowledging that they're there and in the midst of those, also looking back and seeing, in the midst of those trials, seeing God's faithfulness to us.

God's faithfulness never guarantees that we won't experience trials and hard days and hard times. Painful, sorrowful moments and events in our lives. But God's faithfulness means that He will be with us in the midst of it all.

And He will, at the end of it, deliver us in His own way and in His own time. That's why James tells us, consider it joy, my brothers, when you endure trials of various kinds.

Count it to be a joy, He tells us. Not because there's anything to delight in a trial in and of itself, but because in the midst of it, God shows Himself faithful and God begins to work things in our hearts and in our lives when we're suffering.

David understands that. David knows that. That's why repeatedly throughout his life, David called upon the Lord for help. And the reason that David could trust in the Lord and know that God was going to be there to help him was really two-fold, I think.

[ 13 : 32 ] On the one hand, there is the fact that God had given him promises. God had said that He was going to set David on the throne. God had even told David, when He made a covenant with David, that one of David's descendants would rule over God's people for all of eternity, forever.

God had made great promises to David. Most importantly, God had promised David that He would always be with him, that He wouldn't abandon him. So David could count on God because God had made promises to him, because God had given him His Word.

But then secondly, David could count upon God because God was powerful enough to fulfill those promises. You know, we can make promises to people all day long, but if we don't have the strength or the ability to come through on those promises, then our promises aren't worth anything. Or we can have all the strength and all the resources in the world, but if we're not willing to commit ourselves to the help and aid of others, then all those resources are in effect wasted and not useful.

And yet God, who is always true to His Word and infinitely powerful, can always be counted upon because of those realities. If He has made a promise to us, He never lacks the power or the commitment to fulfill all of those promises.

[14:51] And both of those realities, those twin realities of God's power and God's faithfulness to His Word appear here in the middle of this particular psalm. Now, I said earlier that this is a long psalm, so it can be a little bit difficult to sort of wrap your mind around all the contents of this psalm.

But a really helpful way to think about this psalm is just to divide it into sections. Now, the first and the last sections that we read earlier are sort of the opening and closing, and that's the focus, really, of the psalm itself, which is praise to God for His faithfulness.

And then, of course, you have this introduction of the trials of David's life, the cords of death and the cords of Sheol. And then you have, from verse 7 running down through verse 19, you have the picture of God's power put on display for us.

And then verses 20 through verse 30 are really what I would say are the center and meat of this particular psalm. because they explain to us why God can be counted upon by David.

Why? What is it? What is David doing? What is there in David's life? And then what is there about God and His character that makes it possible for David to fully depend upon the Lord?

[16:15] So these verses right in the middle, verse 20 through verse 30, are very important for helping us to understand how can we put ourselves in a similar position to David so that no matter what might come at us in life, we can trust and know that God's going to be there for us and He's going to take care of us.

And then you have following that, continued praise to God for the deliverance that He brings with that eruption of praise toward the end of the psalm. So it's really this middle section, these 10-11 verses in the middle of the psalm that grabbed my attention this week as I was studying, as I was pouring over the psalm, because these verses speak to God's faithfulness, but they also speak to the kinds of people that God displays His faithfulness to.

That is, the kinds of people to whom He has actually given the promises of protection and safety. But before we look at those, I want us to look and see the power of God put on display in this next major section of the psalm, starting there in verse 7.

David says, I cried out to the Lord, and then he, using very highly poetic language, describes how the Lord over and over delivered him. Take a look at verse 7.

He says, Then, so this is in response to his prayer, Then the earth reeled and rocked, the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry.

[17:48] Smoke went up from his nostrils, devouring fire from his mouth, glowing coals flamed forth from him. He bowed the heavens and came down. Thick darkness was under his feet.

He rode on a cherub and flew. He came swiftly on the wings of the wind. He made darkneses covering his canopy around him. Thick clouds, dark with water out of the brightness before him. Hailstones and coals of fire broke forth through his clouds. He continues in verse 13. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice, Hailstones and coals of fire, and he sent out his arrows and scattered them.

He flashed forth lightnings and routed them. Then the channels of the sea were seen, and the foundations of the world were laid bare. At your rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils.

It's interesting the language that David chooses to use here to describe God's power in delivering him. It's all poetic language. I mean, if you search through the accounts of David's life, you're going to find it difficult to find a moment where in the middle of any battle, God rode in on the clouds with the cherubs at his feet and just rode in and settled on the battlefield and solved all the problems for David.

[19:00] No, this isn't to be taken literally, but it's to show us God's power. That when God responds to us, when God comes in answer to our prayers, this is the God who controls the thunder.

This is the God who has the power to shake the earth. He spoke these things into existence, and He controls and He exercises absolute sovereignty over all of these things.

This is the omnipotence of God on display in David's description of how God responds. It's almost the opposite of the way that God responds to Elijah out in the wilderness.

There God is not in the earthquake. He's not in the fire. He's not in the great wind. But here, He is in the earthquake. He's in the fire as it rains down. He's in the storm clouds as they roll through. Have you guys ever seen a large thunderstorm when it's got that wall about it and it's moving toward you? Maybe you've not seen one of those.

[ 20 : 06 ] Maybe you've only been there. You only see the storm as it's right upon you. But have you ever seen one of those, just a wall of clouds? You can just Google it and find some great pictures of just massive thunderstorms rolling in.

That's the picture that David's trying to conjure up in his mind. That's God moving in in His power to deliver David from His enemies.

David is confident that God has the power to do whatever God wants to do. The question is, what does God want to do for him? What does God desire to do for us?

Take a look at the next couple of verses. Verse 16. He sent from on high. He took me. He drew me out of many waters. He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me.

For they were too mighty for me. He confesses it was too much for me. I couldn't handle them. They confronted me in the day of my calamity. But the Lord was my support.

[ 21 : 10 ] He brought me out into a broad place. He rescued me. Now note, because He delighted in me. At the end of the day, why is it that God shows up time and time again to rescue and deliver David?

David's very clear answer is, because the Lord delighted in me, He rescued me over and over because He delighted in me. God takes genuine joy in David.

But why? Why is God so delighted in David? The answer is very clear in the verses that follow. God delights in David because of David's life of obedience before Him.

Now that may sound strange because if you know about David, you know he wasn't perfect. You know he made some major mistakes. I mean, there's the incident with Bathsheba.

I mean, he has a man killed because he slept with a man's wife and he wants to take her as his own wife. There is the incident of taking the census when God had commanded him not to. And that comes with grave consequences, not just for David, but for the nation as a whole.

[ 22 : 22 ] David's not perfect. David has these moments in his life where he fails. But looking back over the course of David's life as a whole, the biblical writers look at David's life in an extremely positive light.

Because David, in comparison with most of the kings that would follow him, David becomes the example for them. In fact, the rest of the kings of Judah are assessed by, if they were a good king, we are told that they followed after the ways of David their father.

If they're a bad king, we are told that they departed or that they did not do the works of David their father. So while we know that David's not perfect, viewed from the wide angle at the end of his life, looking back over his life, the way that the biblical writers do, we have to give a positive assessment of his life and say that he was a righteous man.

He was, as the biblical writers tell us, a man after God's own heart. That's who David was. And so therefore God delighted in him. David describes that though for us.

Look at verse 20. The Lord dealt with me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands, he rewarded me.

[ 23 : 40 ] That's a stunning statement. But it tells us that, and it reminds us that God's answering of our prayers and God's deliverance of us is oftentimes tied to the kind of life that we're living.

There's a reason why James says that it's the prayer of a righteous man that is effective. There's a reason for that. God hears the cries of the righteous.

And David says, because of my righteousness, because of the cleanness of my hands, he heard me, he came and he answered me. And then he emphasizes that over and over. I have kept the ways of the Lord and have not wickedly departed from my God.

All his rules were before me and his statutes I did not put away from me. That's a reference back most likely to Deuteronomy chapter 32 where there are instructions given for the future kings of Israel to write down the law and to know the law.

David's saying, I did that. I know the law. I buried it in my heart. I was blameless before him and I kept myself from my guilt. So, verse 24, the Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.

[ 24 : 56 ] God has answered David's cry for help because David stands before God as a person who lives a righteous life. That's who David is.

Not perfect. Sure. We could cite some incidents. But viewed as a whole throughout his life, David is always assessed positively by the writers of Scripture.

The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness. And that's a reality that remains true of God even today. That God rewards us according to our righteousness at times.

Note verse 25, verses 25 through 30, the second half of this middle section. They explain, they show us that this treatment of God toward David because of David's righteousness is not unique to David, that this is a part of God's character.

With the merciful, you show yourself merciful. With the blameless man, you show yourself blameless. With the purified, you show yourself pure.

[ 26 : 01 ] And with the crooked, you make yourself seem torturous. For you save a humble people, but the haughty eyes you bring down. This is what God is like.

This should sound familiar to you. Jesus adopts very similar language to this in the Beatitudes. where he speaks of blessed are the peacemakers, blessed are the merciful, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

And each time the blessing held out for them is it lines up, it's in accord with their character. So here, with the merciful, God is merciful.

With the blameless, He shows Himself blameless. With the purified, He shows Himself to be pure. He saves the humble. But on the flip side, with the crooked, He's torturous.

Haughty eyes. Prideful people. He brings down. Because this is what God is like. Note verse 30, which I think is probably the most important verse in this entire psalm.

[ 27 : 07 ] this God, the kind of God that David's been describing, this God, His way is perfect. The Word of the Lord proves true.

He is a shield for all those who take refuge in Him. You hear that? The Word of the Lord proves true. Remember, we've said that God can be counted on, and God is always faithful because He is powerful enough to fulfill His promises and He is always true to His promises.

When you couple those things together, they result in continued faithfulness. And that's who God is. His Word always proves true. And what does His Word tell us?

That He is a shield for all who take refuge in Him. That's what God is like. That's what God has promised. That's what God will do for David and for all who take refuge in Him.

Now, as David describes periodically throughout the psalm God's protection of Him, he uses that kind of language over and over. This language of protection, of refuge, of God being a kind of shield to Him.

[ 28 : 25 ] We saw it at the very beginning of the psalm. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock and whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. We see it again now in the middle of the psalm in verse 31.

Who is God but the Lord and who is a rock except our God? This is what God is like. He is a shield about us. He is a fortress around us.

He is a protector. That's even where David lands toward the end of the psalm. The Lord lives and blessed be my rock. That's where he starts. That's where he ends.

And when he uses this language of the rock, he has in mind the idea of a fortress buried deep within a mountain. That was very common in the ancient world, particularly in a rocky region like Israel.

Your last resort, the place that you would go to when all else had failed, when perhaps the capital city had fallen and the king had been run out of town and invading armies were coming in.

[ 29 : 25 ] Your last place of refuge would have been your fortress in the mountains buried deep within the rock. That should sound familiar to those who like the Lord of the Rings series, right? It's a borrowed idea.

But that's what the reality was. And that's where you would put your most secure place. And David says, God is my rock. I bury myself in Him and He protects me from all of my enemies.

When all my other defenses have failed, when I've been chased and run out of town, when I have nothing left, I can count upon God to shield me and protect me and guard me.

No one else can do that. Nothing else can do that. But how does God do that for David? David's not literally, right? David doesn't literally run to his fortress.

He does go into the wilderness. But that's not what David actually literally does. David regroups time and time again. He gets his soldiers together and then eventually they mount an attack and they come back and they win.

[ 30 : 30 ] So from an outsider's perspective, I think if you were looking at the life of David without any reference to God at all, you would look at it and go, well, yeah, okay. I mean, it makes sense. I mean, he won the kingdom because he was powerful in battle and the people flocked to David.

As early as the slaying of Goliath, people cheered for David. Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands they sing. David is the kind of person who draws people to himself. So it makes sense. David, I mean, he's a charismatic figure. He draws people to himself. So even when he's down and out, he's able to rally to himself an army and eventually he can mount an attack and take back what's his.

That's not surprising. That's just the way things happen in the world. That's just what happens. And you could look at it from that sort of outsider perspective and say there's no need for the hand of God in all this.

It's just unfolding as they unfold. You could look at David's life that way. But that's not the way that David looks at his life under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

[ 31 : 39 ] When David says that God is his rock and his shield, David doesn't mean to separate that from the realities of David having to gather an army and fight.

No, David means that it's in the midst of that that God shows himself to be his rock and his fortress and his shield. Take a look at exactly how David describes this. I want you to see this.

I think this is so important for the way that we expect God to intervene and act in our lives and deliver us. Here we go.

Verse 32. The God who equipped me with strength and made my way blameless. Pause for a moment there. Yeah, David's going to go out and fight again.

He always does. But where does his strength to fight come from? According to David, God equipped him with strength. And God equipped him with strength because David had been righteous and blameless, right?

[ 32 : 38 ] But who made David blameless? David says the Lord did. It was God's work. David takes no ultimate credit for any of this. Verse 33. He made my feet like that, like the feet of a deer and set me secure on the heights.

Now, I initially pictured that as anybody who grew up in East Texas would as a little, you know, white-tailed deer and they're hopping around until Caden shoots them and then they have to be eaten.

But that's kind of just this little deer. But that's not what David's thinking of here. David's thinking of these rugged mountain deer, right? The ibex that can climb up the steep slopes and they don't slip, they don't fall.

That's what David is saying. God made my feet secure in rocky places where no man could climb. God made my feet secure. God did that, he's saying. God is helping me to do things that I otherwise could not possibly do.

Verse 34. He trains my hands for war so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. 35. You have given me the shield of your salvation and your right hand supported me and your gentleness made me great.

[ 33 : 52 ] Over and over, God is credited. God did this. Verse 39. You equipped me with strength for the battle. You made those who rise against me sink under me.

You made my enemies turn their backs to me and those who hated me I destroyed. So David doesn't deny I destroyed them. I did that. But he's saying, but you did it through me.

But you ultimately are the source and the cause of all the things that I was out there doing. They cried for help.

This is David's enemies, but there was none to save. They cried to the Lord, but he did not answer them. I beat them fine as the dust before the wind. I cast them out like the mire of the streets.

But now listen. You delivered me from strife with the people. You made me the head of the nations. People whom I had not known served me. Soon as they heard of me, they obeyed me.

[ 34 : 51 ] Foreigners came cringing to me. Foreigners lost heart and came trembling out of their fortresses. All of these things, David acknowledges that on the one hand, David did stuff.

David fought. David took up a shield and David took up a sword and David gathered his armies and David went out and he engaged the enemy. But in and through all of those things, God was strengthening him.

God was lifting up his arm. God was making his feet secure and God was protecting him like a fortress around him. God's promises to protect us and deliver us in the midst of our trials is not a promise that we can simply sit and wait for God to do something.

That bumper sticker says, let go and let God. I can't stand that bumper sticker because it doesn't reflect biblical reality. Biblical reality and a biblical way of thinking doesn't say either I'm going to act and cause it or God's going to act and cause it.

That's not an either or thing in God's mind. God is sovereign and that doesn't ever absolve us of responsibility to do the things that we're supposed to do.

[ 36 : 06 ] But because he's sovereign and he's working through us and he is the strength that flows through us at the end of the day, he gets the praise and he gets the credit for all that he accomplishes through us so that when we face trials, we don't crumble up and hide in a corner until God shows up.

We continue to take the next step after the next step to do the things that we know are right and that we ought to be doing. And in the midst of that, God proves himself faithful.

He continues to supply strength when strength should have been long gone. He protects us from the enemy's arrows when they have a clear shot at us.

We're moving. He's moving in us through us and protecting us and guarding us. And we should be able to look back over the course of whether it's the last 12 months, 12 years or 30 years.

We should be able to look back on the course of our life and we should be able to see God was at work then. I wasn't sitting lazy and idly by.

[ 37 : 16 ] I was doing some stuff, but in that, God was at work. God was faithful. God had delivered me. And when you're able to do that, when you're able to look in hindsight and see that, it helps you as you move forward to know that regardless of what's coming ahead, I don't get to stop moving and throw a pity party and decide that I'm done with life until God does something.

But I also don't have to ever worry that as I take the next step and the step after that and the step after that, that God is ever going to abandon me or fail to show up and be a fortress about me.

Because this is who God is. Now, in all of this, there is good news, right? This is all good news that God's going to protect us and be there for us.

And because of that, we can count our trials to be joy. This is all good news, but it's not the ultimate good news of the gospel. Not quite yet. It's really not yet. Not until you get to the very end of the song and you realize that there was a reason why David seemed to be stretching language almost past the breaking point at times.

Blameless, David? Yes, righteous from the broad perspective of your whole life. But it feels, David, I get it.

[ 38 : 39 ] I get what you're saying, but it feels a little bit stretched beyond what I'm entirely comfortable with. And there's a reason for that. David does not, I believe, see himself as the ultimate fulfillment of this particular psalm.

In other words, David, while he sees this psalm as bearing truth in his life and describing the reality of his life, it also describes a greater reality beyond his own life.

Look down in verse 49. For this I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations and sing to your name. Great salvation he brings to his king and shows steadfast love to his anointed, to David and his offspring forever.

Now that kind of language should sound off the alarms in our minds. When we see God's king, God's anointed, the offspring or the seed, when we see these words, especially in a cluster like that, that should set off the alarm bells in our head and we should say, I think he's talking about Jesus right here.

I think that might be who he's talking about because Jesus is the ultimate king and Jesus is the offspring of David, according to the New Testament writers. And Jesus is called the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed one literally.

[ 40 : 02 ] I think this might be about Jesus. And then as you turn to the New Testament, you find you find that confirmed. Romans chapter 15, verse nine, Paul quotes from these very verses.

He says in verse eight before that, I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy as it is written.

Now, Psalm 135. Therefore, I will praise you among the Gentiles and sing to your name. That's Psalm 135. And yet what Paul says is this is about Jesus.

I'm telling you that Christ became a servant. Christ came and served. In order that the Gentiles would come.

How is David addressed at the beginning of this song? What is David called? Is it simply David the king?

[ 41 : 09 ] No. Look at the inscription at the beginning. Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord. Christ became a servant.

And then Psalm 135. And then two more quotations from the Old Testament, both applied to Jesus. One of them about the root of Jesse. That's David's father. One of them explicitly telling us that the one from the line of David is, in fact, Jesus himself.

And then there is, of course, in the middle of this psalm, that great explanation. Why did God respond to David with such faithfulness? Because he delighted in him.

You have a servant. In whom the Lord delights. Which sounds an awful lot like like Isaiah 42.

Behold, my servant in whom my soul delights. Which sounds an awful lot. Like the words of God spoken over Jesus baptism in Matthew 3.

[ 42 : 19 ] This is my son in whom my delight. These threads all come together. Always.

They run their way through the Old Testament into the New Testament. And they always come and weave together and show us the portrait of Jesus. The reason why we don't have to be bothered about the stretching of language and this blamelessness blamelessness is because ultimately, ultimately, Psalm 18 is pointing us toward Jesus.

Who really and truly had the cords of death wrapped around him. Who went down into the grave, into Sheol. And was entangled there.

And who was brought out of the grave. Over whom death did not have victory because God brought him out of it. This Psalm is ultimately pointing us to Christ, which is good news for you.

If you look back over the last year and you go, I was not righteous. I was not blameless. I suffered in that moment because of my sin.

[ 43 : 37 ] I deserved that. It should have happened to me. I am where I am. I am in this uncomfortable, terrible place in life because I have made sinful decisions.

And you go, Psalm 18 doesn't help me because I am not like David. I am just a sinner. I am to blame. God would have protected me, but I wasn't worth protecting.

He didn't delight in me because I wasn't worth delighting in. That's okay. Why? Because God delighted in his son. Who went into the grave on your behalf to bear your sin.

So that now in Christ, not because of anything that you have done, but because of all that he has done now in Christ, God might delight in you.

pass over all your sins, having punished them in Jesus. And deliver you from all your enemies.

[ 44 : 42 ] Let's pray.