

Steadfast Hearts

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[0 : 00] us, Psalm 108. A song, a psalm of David. My heart is steadfast, O God.

I will sing and make melody with all my being. Awake, O harp and lyre. I will awake the dawn. I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples. I will sing praises to you among the nations. For your steadfast love is great above the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens. Let your glory be over all the earth. That your beloved ones may be delivered.

Give salvation by your right hand and answer me. God has promised in his holiness, with exaltation I will divide up Shechem and portion out the valley of Sukkoth. Gilead is mine.

Manasseh is mine. Ephraim is my helmet. Judah my scepter. Moab is my wash basin. Upon Edom I cast my shoe. Over Philistia I shout in triumph.

[1 : 01] Who will bring me to the fortified city? Who will lead me to Edom? Have you not rejected us, O God? You do not go out, O God, with our armies. Well, grant us help against the foe.

For vain is the salvation of man. With God we shall do valiantly. It is he who will tread down our foes. You guys have probably heard the comparison made of the Christian life to kind of like a roller coaster, right?

It's like there's ups and downs. And I think some people who are a little bit more careful about making such comparisons will say that it is like a roller coaster, but it's kind of the overall trajectory is up, right?

It's an ascending roller coaster. And in certain regards, that's definitely true, right? Our circumstances can change. We can be up and down.

Even our moods can change. We could be doing well in certain areas of faith, and then we could stumble and we can sit in certain ways. But even in the midst of these ups and downs, it doesn't mean that our devotion to God wavers, right?

[2 : 14] Even in the midst of the ups and downs for the Christian, there should be a steadfastness of love to God because God is steadfast in his love toward us. And Psalm 108 is a great picture of that.

It's basically teaching us that we worship God with steadfast hearts because of his steadfast love for us. And as I mentioned earlier, so verses 1 to 5 are taken entirely from Psalm 57, 7 to 11.

And verses 6 to 13 are taken entirely from Psalm 60, 5 to 12. But these verses have been repurposed in this period with the different structure in Psalm 108. And so we see the praise in verses 1 to 4, the prayer in verses 5 to 6, and God's promise in verses 7 to 13.

So let's look at that. In order, first in verses 1 to 3, the psalmist kind of pledges his praise and worship to God. He says, My heart is steadfast, O God.

I will sing and make melody with all my being. Awake, O harp and lyre. I will awake the dawn. I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples. I will sing praise to you among the nations.

[3 : 21] So his heart is set on God. He sings steadfast. So it's a different word from the later, the steadfast love, different word. But it's saying that his love for God, his heart is established, firm before God.

And he says, I will sing and make melody with all my being. The phrase with all my being literally means with my glory. So Genesis 49.6 uses my glory in parallel to my soul.

So I think this is a reference to that God-given human capacity to relate to God and worship God. So my glory. So worships God. My glory. I will make melody with all my glory.

With my glory. And this worshiper is so eagerly anticipating praising God that he says, Awake, O harp and lyre. I will awake the dawn.

So he's not hitting the snooze button in the morning, right? He is eager, excited. He wakes up his musical instruments of worship.

[4 : 24] And he meets the dawn with his singing. And not only does he worship God himself, he anticipates singing praise to God among the peoples and among the nations.

Because our God's not a local God, but because he's not even an American God or a Western God, but because he's the God overall, he anticipates worshiping him in this way with all peoples. And then in verse 4, the psalmist gives his reason for his pledge of praise. He says, For your steadfast love is great above the heavens.

Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. Psalmist's heart is established. It's steadfast before God and it's praise to God because God is loyal and steadfast in love toward us.

And this love of God is great above the heavens and God's faithfulness reaches to the clouds. It's just like the sky above us, his faithfulness and his love for us. No, no limit. There's no bounds.

[5 : 23] And after this praise, the psalmist transitions to a prayer in verse 5. He says, Be exalted, O God, above the heavens. Let your glory be over all the earth.

And this makes sense, right? Because God's steadfast love is great above the heavens. So then it's right that he is exalted, lifted up above the heavens, glorified in this way. And the psalmist earlier said he sings to God with his glory and that he wants God's glory to be over all the earth.

And this is really a prayer that God's presence, his heavenly presence would invade earth. That God's heavenly rule and salvation would extend on the earth.

So it's really kind of the same as the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray in the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6.10. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And the psalmist continues that prayer in verse 6.

That your beloved ones may be delivered. Give salvation by your right hand and answer me. So this is the first indication in this psalm that God's people are actually facing some kind of trouble and that they need God's deliverance.

[6 : 33] Because God had made a covenant with his people and because God had pledged his love toward them, his glory spreading over the earth, as the psalmist is praying, is connected to their salvation.

If God's reign is established on earth, then they will be delivered from their plight because they are God's people. And this prayer will be resumed later in verse 12, but the psalmist now recalls a promise that God had made previously to them as the basis for his confident prayer.

And he says in verses 7 to 8, God has promised in his holiness, with exaltation I will divide up Shechem and portion out the valley of Sukkoth. Gilead is mine. And Manasseh is mine. Ephraim is my helmet.

Judah my scepter. So this is a declaration of God's unchallenged power and sovereignty. So Shechem and Sukkoth refer to the eastern region of the promised land that God had given to his people.

Gilead, Manasseh, and Ephraim refer to the northern kingdom of Israel. And Judah refers to the southern kingdom of Israel. The west isn't mentioned because that's where the sea is, Mediterranean Sea.

[7 : 36] And so this is really a declaration that God reigns over all of his people. And the language of helmet and scepter portray God as a divine warrior and a king.

But it's not merely the nation of Israel over which God reigns. Verse 9 adds, Moab is my wash basin. Upon Edom I cast my shoe.

Over Philistia I shout in triumph. The nations that surround Israel, who have been throughout their history frequent foes of Israel, also belong to God and fall under his rule.

The wash basin is a symbol of servanthood. A shoe is a symbol of ownership. It's because in the ancient world, in the ancient Near East, they measured out lands that they can buy by shoes. How many steps basically or shoes that they can, makes up that land. Which is probably why in Ruth 4, when the kinsman redeemer denies redeeming the land, he takes off his shoes and symbolically hands it to the other person.

[8 : 38] So by saying, Edom I cast my shoe. God's saying, I own this. And over Philistia I shout in triumph. So even though God had, so this is the lordship and sovereignty of God.

But even though God had made this promise to his people in the past, this promise triumph seems kind of distant to the psalmist as he's writing this. And so he says in verses 10 to 11, Who will bring

me to the fortified city?

Who will lead me to Edom? Have you not rejected us, O God? You do not go forth, O God, with our armies. So only God can lead Israel in the conquest of Edom and its fortified city.

But God, it seems, has deserted them. There is a seeming absence of God. But this is not a cry of despair. But it's a plea to God to correct this wrong.

Because they know that God is still their God. That God still belongs to them. His covenant is still binding. It still abides. And so verses 12 to 13, he continues that prayer.

[9 : 39] O grant us help against the foe. For vain is the salvation of man. With God we shall do valiantly. It is he who will tread down our foe. So those last two verses are structured to really highlight that contrast between the vanity of the strength of man and the valiancy of depending on God.

That contrast between the weakness of man and the power of God. And so he concludes with that kind of high note of prayer. And this salvation from foes surrounding Israel and God's people really points to and is fulfilled by the salvation of God's people.

Even in the new covenant. From their spiritual foes. From sin. From Satan. And if we try to save ourselves. If we turn to man for salvation. Then it will be in vain.

But if we turn to God for salvation. If we turn to Jesus, his son. Who died for our sins on the cross. And was raised from the dead for our redemption and victory. Then we shall do valiantly.

And the question to ask in light of this psalm is. Do we let this reality control our life? Do we let this reality of God and his salvation control our lives?

[10 : 53] Because even though the psalmist feels rejected by God. Right? He continues to trust. Right? He continues to praise. And why? Because he believes God's promises.

Because he believes that God has not rejected his people. Because he believes that God's steadfast love continues. Because he believes in God's faithfulness. And so we worship God likewise with steadfast hearts.

Because of his steadfast love for us. The basis for our worship. Our steadfast devotion to God. Is not our willpower. Right? But it's God's ongoing steadfast love.

So maybe you have a tough job. Or maybe you have relational problems. Maybe you feel great guilt and shame because of your sins. Maybe you don't feel like getting up in the morning.

You might not feel like reading your Bible. You might not feel like praying. You might not feel like coming to the Sunday worship service. But you awake the dawn with your singing.

[11 : 53] Your heart is steadfast before God. Not because you feel like it. But because you believe in the steadfast love of God. And so that's, I think, can really help us in our lives when things are difficult.

And with that in mind, let's awake the harp and lyre. And sing of God's steadfast love.