

The LORD Is My Rock

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[0 : 0 0] as you are tuning in let me open us up with a word of prayer would you bow with me God we come and just pray that you would just help us quieten ourselves before you this evening God that we would just calm calm our thoughts God that we would just put the concerns that we brought in this evening and just God hold those at bay for us so that we can be open to you and open to your spirit and open to your teaching God so that we can pray with conviction so God that we can pray with great insight and pray in ways that glorify you God in ways that expose us for who we are we ask all this in your name amen so if you look at

Psalm 18 we'll preface this with a few things one of those is that the message this evening is is a message to followers of Jesus and so that is the the approach that I'm taking so if you are a follower of Jesus this message is for you if that's not a decision that has been made then the message for you this evening would be follow Jesus and the also just want to provide some of the terminology that I'll use and so the the word for God that I'll be using is the Lord as much as I can and the reason I'll be using that is because that's the that's the phrasing here in the psalm and so when I refer to the Lord that refers to God but I might say God and mean Lord and say Lord and mean God so the same and and then finally

Psalm 18 is is a long read and so just in in thought of our time that we have I'll be using a format to help us get through the entire psalm but to do that we'll actually read it in sections and so the I've divided the psalm up into sections and so I'll be reading those and then parts of what would be a little bit different too is that often in a sermon we read the the passage and then it's explained to us in this case I'm actually going to explain before we read and the purpose for doing that is that I want the the psalm to be able to speak for itself and so hopefully I'm going to try to set you up so that you're ready to hear the psalm and allow it to speak for itself and then finally also just in recognition of just the length of this psalm is that I will try to be succinct in what I say so I the words will be few hopefully and and then we will be into the passage so to to set us up the the question I have for you is when you find yourself in weakness from where do you seek strength do you seek strength from family from well perhaps you seek strength from your charisma or your intelligence perhaps you're well connected a person of power and influence perhaps you have good friends and you know just who to call perhaps you have that little thing we call grit that strength of will so in that moment of weakness you rely upon it well I can tell you this that whatever earthly qualities that you possess whatever things that God has blessed you with that God blessed David more

David who is the psalmist is someone who has all that the world could offer and this is the psalm that David says so I would say as we look at this we're going to see that David in the time of weakness he seeks strength and protection from the Lord not earthly things and if David is willing to make that choice then so should we let us look here at the first portion of Psalm 18 with the idea of the Lord protects beginning in verse 1 I love you O Lord my strength the Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer my God my rock in whom I take refuge my shield and the horn of my salvation my stronghold I call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised and I am saved from my enemies we see that the Lord protects but to what purpose does the Lord protect it is certainly not to a life of ease despite the protection of the Lord the psalmist still faces great difficulty and we will see that as the psalmist calls upon the Lord the Lord hears his cries now I want you to see that the Lord hears beginning in verse 4 the cords of death encompassed me the torrents of destruction assailed me the cords of Sheol entangled me the snares of death confronted me 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 so we see that the Lord here not only does he hear but he also responds to the very foundations of the earth he responds and the Lord he is formidable he is fearsome he is terrifying are you comfortable of thinking of the Lord in this fashion if not then why and if so does

your personal prayer life reflect this comfort with understanding the Lord as formidable as fearsome and as terrifying now I want you to hear how the Lord thunders beginning in verse 7 then the earth reeled and rocked and the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked because he was angry smoke went up from his nostrils and 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 darkness his covering his canopy around him thick clouds dark with water out of the brightness before him hell stones and coals of fires broke through his clouds the Lord also thundered in the heavens and the most high uttered his voice hell stones 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 would lay bare at your rebuke oh Lord and the blast of it the breath of your nostrils we have seen that people matter to the Lord he protects them and hears them we have seen the fearsomeness of the Lord he thunders we find that the Lord holds all things together and makes plans for the individual the Lord makes plans for the individual personally

[8 : 20] I can't make plans to get three families at my house at the same time but yet the Lord in his plans is able to focus on the individuals why does the Lord do this why does the Lord show such great concern for individuals we see that the Lord delights in some people now I want you to hear how the Lord rescues beginning in verse 16 he sent from on high he took me he drew me out of the waters he rescued me from my strong enemy from my strong enemy for they were too mighty for me they confronted me in the day of my calamity but the Lord was my support he brought me out into a broad place he rescued me because he delighted in me so why does the Lord delight in some people because they are righteous no they are not they are not perfect and yes they are still sinners but they are true to their

Lord in their actions and their thoughts does the Lord ever seem far from you does this relationship that's described here in this psalm seem alien to you the question I would have is are you righteous I think the pitfall of many would be what I would call conditional righteousness have the audacity to say to the Lord I will follow you completely once I experience the blessing to the Lord we do not get to say if you do this then I will do that I want you to hear now why the Lord rewards so we will see that the Lord rewards beginning in verse 20 the Lord dealt with me according to my righteousness according to the cleanness of my hands he rewarded me for I have kept the ways of the Lord and have not wickedly departed from my God for all his rules were before me and his statutes I did not put away from me I was blameless before him and I kept myself from guilt so the Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight with the merciful you show yourself merciful with the blameless man you show yourself blameless with the purified you show yourself pure with the crooked you make yourself seem torturous for you save a humble person but the haughty eyes you bring down I have a question for you supposing that you had some money you wanted to invest would you invest it with an accountant who is currently in prison because that accountant was overseeing a Ponzi scheme and has defrauded millions of dollars from people would you invest with such a person of course not the Lord is similar with his blessings the Lord gives to the righteous because such blessings will not be misused now I want you to see that the Lord gives beginning in verse 28 for it is you who light my lamp for the Lord my God lightens my darkness for by you I cannot run against a troop and by my God I can leap over a wall 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 for who is God but the Lord and who is a rock except our God the God who equipped me with strength and made my way blameless he made my feet like the feet of a deer and set me secure on the heights he trained my hands for war so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze you have given me the shield of your salvation and your right hand supported me and your gentleness made me great you gave me a wide place for my steps under me and my feet did not slip evil will sometimes prevail evil will sometimes win for the day but against the favor of the Lord evil collapses are you someone the Lord will favor to answer this question there's another question if the Lord did show you favor would you give him glory or keep that glory for yourself now I want you to see that the Lord favors beginning in verse 37 I pursued my enemies and overtook them and did not turn back till they were consumed I thrust them through so that they were not able to rise they fell under my feet for you have 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 they cried for help but there cried to save the

[14 : 46] Lord but he did not answer them I beat them with fine as dust before the wind I cast them out like the mire of the streets you delivered me from strife with the people you made me the head of the nations people whom I had not known served me as soon as they heard of me they obeyed me foreigners came cringing to me foreigners lost heart and came trembling out of their fortresses the favor of the Lord is contingent upon its recipient the recipient needs to be righteous but also contend that the recipient needs to give glory to God and not take glory to the self how does the psalmist do in this regard does the psalmist give glory to God let us hear the answer the Lord be praised we begin in 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 people 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 bonnet for this I praise you oh Lord among the nations and sing to your name great salvation he brings to his kings and shows steadfast love to his anointed to David and his offspring forever