

God's Deliverance

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[0 : 01] Psalm 54, I will read it out loud. To the choir master with stringed instruments, a maskill of David, when the Ziphites went and told Saul, is not David hiding among us?

O God, save me by your name, and vindicate me by your might. O God, hear my prayer, give ear to the words of my mouth. For strangers have risen against me.

Ruthless men seek my life. They do not set God before themselves. Selah. Behold, God is my helper. The Lord is the upholder of my life.

He will return the evil to my enemies. In your faithfulness, put an end to them. With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you. I will give thanks to your name, O Lord, for it is good.

For he has delivered me from every trouble. And my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies. So the title of our psalm says, To the choir master with stringed instruments, maskill of David, when the Ziphites went and told Saul, is not David hiding among us?

[1 : 16] So this is a reference to the story told in 1 Samuel 23, 15 to 29. And so David was basically a man who couldn't catch a break. He's being pursued.

He's really close to being killed by King Saul. And he's hiding in Ziph. And while he's hiding in the wilderness of Ziph, the Ziphites, who has nothing to do with him, like, I mean, what did I ever do to you, Ziphites?

They go and tell King Saul, like, Hey, David's hiding among us. Come and get him. And so it's in that state that David maybe pens the psalm or prays the psalm out loud, and then later he records it at some point.

And so that's the back story. And you could tell David is, you know, wary. You know, his men, along with him, are probably, you know, tired and maybe just haggard from all the fleeing and hiding.

And now they have to be on the road again, fleeing from Saul because of the Ziphites. And so it is at this point he writes this psalm in order to teach us that, or to really remind himself as well, that those who look to God for deliverance will look in triumph on their enemies.

[2 : 37] So that's really the main point of the psalm, Psalm 54, and that those who look to God for deliverance will look in triumph on their enemies. And so first we see in verses 1 to 3 his cry to God, and in verses 4 to 5 his confidence in God.

And then in verses 6 to 7 we see his confession of God, his future confession of God. And so in verse 1, first David cries out to God. He's cried to God. He says, O God, save me by your name and vindicate me by your might.

So he invokes in his prayer God's name and God's might, right? So by calling on God to save him by his name, so David's really referring to God's entire person and character, which is what the name represents.

And so he's basically calling upon his character and saying, God, you are the almighty God. You are the creating God. You are the Lord of all the earth. You have been steadfast in your love and your faithfulness toward me.

So God, by your name, save me. So be who you are. Be who you say you are in your name and save me. That's what he's saying. And then similarly, David calls upon God to vindicate him by his might.

[3 : 48] And so the word vindicate, if we were to translate it more literally, just means judge. So he's asking God to judge. So not only is he calling upon God's character, he's saying, God, you are the judge of all the earth.

So I am in the right and these people are pursuing me and they're in the wrong. So judge rightly in this situation and vindicate me, save me. And so the reason he prays this way is because he recognizes that in this flight, it's not just his life that's at stake, but it's God's own glory and

reputation and name that's at stake.

And so he prays on the basis of those things. And then having cried out to God on the basis of his character, David cries out in a more personal way in verse 2, Oh God, hear my prayer.

Give ear to the words of my mouth. And the anthropomorphism here. The pipes.

Okay. Yeah. Yeah. That's very distracting. It's okay. So the anthropomorphism, just attributing human characteristics to something that's not human, right?

[4 : 56] So God is not human, but it's almost, he uses human terms, he refers to God's ear as if he has an ear like us. And that really makes the prayer feel much more intimate and personal, right?

He says, Oh God, give ear to my words of my mouth, to the words of my mouth. So it's, David's not relating to God abstractly as this distant deity, but he's relating to him personally and concretely as someone that's with him and hears him.

So God, I know you're there. So don't turn a deaf ear to me. Turn your ear to me and hear the words that I'm speaking to you now. So he's relating to him in very personal terms. And then in verse 3, David brings together verses 1 and 2, that kind of basis prayer on the basis of God's character, and then prayer based on his personal plea.

For strangers have risen against me. Ruthless men seek my life. They do not set God before themselves. Selah. So these wicked men seeking David's life, that's connected to the fact that they have not set God before themselves.

So once again, it's God's glory and name that's at stake here, not just David's personal skin. And so, and David's heartfelt cry to God here in this two verses is instructive for us, because when we cry out to God for deliverance in all of our situations, the troubles that we face, the temptations that we face, the problems that we face, when we bring our request to God in prayer, we have to recognize that we need to seek God's will in the midst of it, right?

[6 : 25] That's how Jesus taught us to pray, right? It's our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And so it's our prayers as we come to him have to be aligned with his will, as David's doing here.

It's about his name. It's about, it's about people who are pursuing him, whose, who are, whose lives are not set before God. Our cry to God has to be aligned with the will of God. And it's only then that we can have confidence in God, which is what we see in verses four to five.

Notice the future tense in verse five, the deliverance for David hasn't come yet. But even then, even though that hasn't come yet in faith, David expresses his confidence. He says, behold, God is my helper.

The Lord is the upholder of my life. He will return the evil to my enemies in your faithfulness, put an end to them. So there's a repetition of the word life here that beautifully contrast the Lord with David's enemies, because in verse three, David said, the ruthless men seek my life.

But David assured that the Lord is the upholder of his life. So that should give us tremendous confidence and hope in our day to day, because the word, and the word Lord, notice here is not in caps, which means it's not the proper name of God, but it's the word that means Lord or master, right?

[7 : 49] So when people in our lives seek to do us harm, then we can remember from this Psalm that God, that our Lord, our master is seeking to heal, not harm, right? When the circumstances of our lives seem to conspire against us for evil, we can remember that our master, our Lord seeks our good, right?

And when everything around us seems to bring us down, we can remember that our master, our Lord is lifting us up, right? He's the upholder of our lives. And nowadays it's the people are so sensitive about being, you know, politically correct.

And that, that the sentiment that's expressed in verse five, uh, makes some Christians a little queasy. You know, it says, he will return the evil to my enemies in your faithfulness, put an end to them, right?

It's pretty, uh, forceful language. And it's true. Sometimes people will ask Christians, well, like, didn't Jesus teach us to love our enemies, right? I mean, didn't he tell us to turn, uh, the other cheek, right?

And to pray for those who persecute us. And these things are all true. Jesus did teach us, us to love our enemies, but that doesn't mean that God won't judge the wicked, right? That God will avenge his people at some, at some point of the day.

[9 : 01] And, and it's, that's the scripture teaches that, right? Romans 12, 19 says, behold, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God for it is written. Vengeance is mine. I will repay, says the Lord.

And remember that David's not here merely seeking his own selfish, you know, well-being, but he's seeking God's glory and name and reputation in this as well. And so when we recognize that, then we, that this, his prayer is, his forceful prayer for the judgment of his enemies makes more sense because God's, is the one who avenges his people and, and, and protects, uh, his glory. And we also need to recognize that whenever we pray for justice, right? There's always two sides involved, right? I mean, there's a, uh, justice will affect both the victim of injustice and the perpetrators of injustice, right?

So when, uh, in order for, you know, sexual abuse to stop, right? It's the, the abusers, uh, need to be caught and jailed, right? In order for the human trafficking to stop, right?

The, the, you know, the kidnappers and traffickers and slave owners need to be punished, right? So when David simply making explicit in his prayer, what we implicitly pray for whenever we pray for justice, because there can be no justice apart from judgment of the wicked, right?

[10 : 12] So it's, it's, he's, so those things, two things go hand in hand. We can't let our compassion for sinners, uh, lead us to condone sin, right? So here, uh, so there is rightness to David's prayer and calling for God's vengeance.

So he expresses his confidence in God. And having done that, he turns to the final phase of his prayer, verses six to seven, uh, where he anticipates his future confession of God.

Uh, verses six to seven, it says, with a free will offering, I will sacrifice to you. I will give thanks to your name, O Lord, for it is good, for he has delivered me from every trouble and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies.

So those who look to God for deliverance will look on their enemies in triumph. Uh, and David knows that God will answer his prayer and that he will in turn in response, uh, worship God and give thanks to his name.

Oh Lord, that's his proper name. That's why it's in caps, right? So he's saying that in the future, in response to God's faithfulness in answering his prayers, they will confess his name because it is good.

[11 : 16] Uh, and, uh, and we know that David's confidence was not unfounded because God did deliver him from Saul, right? And God did, uh, uh, make him king over Israel as he promised.

And David did look on triumph, look in triumph on his enemies. But that's not the end of the story, right? For the Psalm, because Israel continued to sing the Psalm in their life long after David was dead.

And the church continues to sing the Psalm and to pray the Psalm today because it applies today, even actually even in a fuller sense than it applied for David, uh, because David cried out to God in verse one, save me by your name.

Uh, and, and the Hebrew word there for save is yashe, which is the word from which we get the yes, yesu, right? Or Jesus. That's his name. And that's why in Matthew 121, an angel of the Lord appears to Joseph who was betrothed to Mary.

And it says, she will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins, right? So all the enemies that God's people vanquish in the old Testament, they all represented and pointed to are the ultimate enemies of the soul, which Ephesians two talks about it, right?

[12 : 24] The world, the flesh and the devil. And then the passage we will look at, right? And this coming Sunday, Ephesians six talks about how our battle, our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers and against the authorities and against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

And likewise, if the enemies of the old, of old pointed to these ultimate enemies, then all of God's redemptive acts in the old Testament in saving his people also pointed to and was fulfilled by Christ's ultimate redemption of his people.

That he is Jesus, the one who saves us from our sins. So the main point of the Psalm, those who look to God for deliverance, will look in triumph on their enemies, applies to us in a much richer, fuller sense, because Jesus lived the perfect life of righteousness, died for the, bear the punishment for our sins, absorbed the wrath of God, the justice of God.

And then he rose again and ascended to the heaven for our vindication, so that we who have placed our trust in him are united with him in his life, in his glory and reign. And so that we can rightly say that our enemies have been vanquished, have been conquered, and we can look to Christ for that. So then the application of that is that when we are, you know, harassed by the world, and everywhere we turn, right, the world teems with temptation, right, even though we live in such world, and all the pressures and influences of this world seek to lead us astray from God, we could look to Jesus to save us by his name, to look to Jesus for deliverance, and we will look in triumph over those enemies.

[14 : 03] And when we live by, then we will live by his way and not by the ways of this world. And when we're weary from battling our own flesh, right, the sinfulness of our own hearts, when we see in all the good deeds we do, it's tainted with sin, and we wrestle with that, and we wrestle with just the entrenched sinfulness of our lives, we look to Jesus for deliverance, not placing our hope in our own righteousness, but in him, and then we can be rest assured that we can look in triumph on our enemies.

And then finally, when we are assailed by Satan and his minions, when we fall to their lies, their accusations, telling us that we are not worthy of God, telling us that we, God does not love us or care for us, that he has neglected us, and that's why these things are happening to us, then we look to Jesus once again for deliverance.

And he will help us to triumph over our enemies, because he has vanquished the world of flesh and the devil. And so my encouragement to you all tonight is just whatever you might be dealing with, just remember that your enemies have been defeated by Christ, and in his name there is deliverance for us, and look to Jesus for deliverance, and then we will look on our enemies in triumph.

So with that, let's pray.