

TRUTH B-P CHURCH
Adults Sunday School

PSALM 18 – PRAISING GOD WHO DELIVERS! (Part 5)

I. GOD’S EMPOWERMENT LEADS TO DELIVERANCE (II)

We continue with how God's empowerment has given the psalmist the ability to overcome his enemies. I quote from Rev Timothy Tow: “Self-help with God's help is the best help.” It is not God's design that we should sit around and do nothing in accomplishing His will. It is true that God does not need us or dependent on us to fulfill His will. However, God is pleased to involve us in order that His will come to pass. And He did so by giving us the ability for the task. That includes our deliverance.

Verse 40, “Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me.”

The enemies were completely at the mercy of the psalmist. They were not dead yet. Otherwise it would be their heads rather than the necks which God gave him. It is entirely up the psalmist if he should keep them alive or not. If he decided to end their life, all he needs to do is to “chop” off their neck and that's it, as simple as that. To the enemies, they were completely defeated. No way they will get out of their predicament. Moreover it is God who subdued them and handed them over to the psalmist. And the true power is God, not the psalmist. The psalmist is powerful as far as God enables him.

These enemies have been described as those who hate him. Those who hate the Lord hate him, since he is a man after God's own heart. There is no good reason to hate the psalmist as he follows God and serves Him. There is good reason why they should be destroyed.

Verse 41, “They cried, but *there was none to save them: even unto the LORD, but he answered them not.*”

It must be terrible to fall into the hands of the living God. And that is the reason why they cried. Being enemies, to fall into the hands on whom you are fighting against is a humiliating thing. But now something goes beyond the embarrassment or shame, it is their dear life which is in danger. Anytime their heads would be chopped off or be slain by the sword. Since they fear death, they cried out for someone who can help them even God. But God refused to hear them. Why?

God will definitely hear the prayers of His children. When sins are forgiven and made right with God, there is a relationship restored between them. Why will God not answer their prayers when His children come before Him? Sure He will answer them! But in this case here, they cried out to God not because they believed Him and wanted to submit to Him. They only want their life to be saved. Anybody who can save them, they are willing even to bow down and worship them. God is not the only one they sought after. God is just one of them. This is a wrong attitude. God will not buy it. That's why He refused to answer them even though they cried out to Him.

Verse 42, “Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.”

This verse illustrates the degree of destruction brought to the enemies. They were not merely destroyed but utterly destroyed. They were reduced to dust and blown away by the wind. Such destruction brings about the impossibility of any hope to gather and rise up again. And it came with

shame and humiliation that accompanied the destruction. The enemies end up like dirt cast out in the streets. No one will collect the dirt and keep them as if they are precious. Instead, they will be trampled upon and upon entering the house, people will shake off the dust off their feet or shoes. The enemies were utterly shamed and humiliated for what they had done and finally be destroyed utterly.

Verse 43, “Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; *and* thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people *whom* I have not known shall serve me.”

The people here do not refer to the Israelites but the heathen around Israel. They have such strivings because every man did that which was right in their own eyes. They follow their own sinful heart and insist on their own wicked way. And here we find the strivings of the heathen going against the psalmist. This is expected as the psalmist is walking on the righteous pathway led by the Spirit. For sure, those who are ignorant of this Spirit-filled way will definitely be found going the way which satisfies their sinful lusts. But God delivered the psalmist from this lustrous way.

Since the psalmist is on the Lord's side, he won over all the heathen. As such, not only the psalmist was king in his own nation Israel, he was also king of the heathen around Israel. True enough, some of the heathen nations that were under Israel were the Philistines, Syrians, Ammonites, Moabites and Edomites. They were a people not known to the psalmist and yet they serve him. If this is not the power of God, what is?

Verse 44, “As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.”

The impact of fear that the psalmist exerted upon his enemies is significant. The moment they heard of the psalmist's greatness, they immediately knew that they had to obey him. They submit to him and be ready for him immediately. Again this is God's mighty hand that allowed this to happen.

Verse 45, “The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places.”

As long as the psalmist is still the king in power, there is no way that his enemies will rise up again. And even when the enemies fled for their lives and hid themselves well in caves, the fear continues to dwell in their heart. They cannot sleep in peace. They cannot eat without holding a sword in their other hand. That's the kind of fear instilled in the heart of the enemies.

II. THANK GOD FOR HIS DELIVERANCE

This is the final section of the psalmist's praise for God's deliverance. By now, the psalmist's heart is filled with thanksgiving for what the Lord has done for him. Truly this should also be our response to God's deliverance by having a heart of thanksgiving.

Verse 46, “The LORD liveth; and blessed *be* my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.”

The psalmist addressed God in three ways. First, He lives. The psalmist experienced God's presence in his life. He may not have seen God face to face, but he saw His mighty hand that works in his life. That's walking by faith, not by sight. Truly God is a living God, not dead. Many live as if God is dead. Therefore the way they live their life shows they are not preparing for any accountability. But God is living in many ways. Looking at the creation. It is so lively and full of life. Truly the LORD liveth!

Second, He is my Rock. This is the third time the psalmist addressed God as Rock in this psalm (see verses 2 and 31). The rock represents stability and safety. When God is our Rock, we become firm and unmoveable. He gives us perfect stability and safety.

Third, He is the God of my salvation. In other words, no God no salvation. Salvation means being saved from the power and bondage to sin. And this salvation stretches beyond the grave and death, and even to eternity where we will dwell with God forever in the new heaven and new earth. How can we not thank God and praise Him who lives, who is our Rock, and the God of our salvation?

Verse 47, “It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people under me.”

The psalmist did not trust in his own strength or count his victory as his own personal effort and wisdom. He knew that God is the One who made this possible for him. As David is a man of war, he has become more and more experienced and skillful after each battle fought. Yet he remained humble and knew that it was God who gave him the victory and caused the enemies to fall into his hand. So it is not about how powerful one's army or how intelligent man is in the strategy to win the war. If not for God's enabling, where is the victory?

Verse 48, “He delivereth me from mine enemies: yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man.”

The psalmist was able to overcome the enemies not because the enemies were weak people. It was the opposite. The enemies were very powerful and strong. If not for God's intervention, David could have died in the hands of his enemies. And therefore it was God who saved him and granted him safety.

It was believed the violent man was none other than king Saul. Being king, he has all the necessary resources to take David's life anytime. Yet he could not do it because God protected him. There were a few occasions which David could have ended his fugitive life straightaway by getting rid of King Saul. David would be king anyway, it was a matter of time David will succeed Saul. But God forbids him to take things in his own hand. He has to learn to wait upon God. Though King Saul is violent, God delivered David from all harm and danger.

Verse 49, “Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.”

The psalmist wanted the whole world to know the power of God and what God has done for him. He wanted to make known how God has delivered him from all his troubles. He himself may be the king of Israel, who won countless battles, and yet his pride is not upon earthly things. He gives thanks to God, shows the honour he gave to God in his heart.

Verse 50, “Great deliverance giveth he to his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.”

A king is invincible before the eyes of his own people. But the psalmist is not afraid that people may look to God as the true King of their life. He Himself acknowledged God who is highest, and He himself is only an instrument which God the Almighty King is pleased to use. And this deliverance extends even beyond David and to his descendents as well.

III. CONCLUSION

This psalm is a psalm of victory which is why David is praising God who delivers. On hindsight, we know David must be delivered and not killed by his enemies. If he is killed by the enemies before he became king, how will the Messiah come? This is God's highest purpose why He must deliver David from all his enemies. Yet we see the progression of David's deliverance from his enemies. He gives God all the glory for the deliverance he experienced. God's enablement upon him also encouraged his heart to praise Him for what He has done. Let us know that the God of David is also our God today. Let us look to God for deliverance and be ready to praise Him when His deliverance comes. May God help us. Amen.