

SBC – May 5, 2024
Psalm 28 (NKJV)
“Answered Prayer”

Psalm 28 (NKJV)
A Psalm of David.

This is another Psalm of David and once again we don't know the specific occasion. However, David is in a desperate situation needing God to intervene. Once again David's enemies are threatening to take him out.

Slide # 1

Outline – Psalm 28

“Answered Prayer”

- vv. 1-2 Pleading for God to Hear
 - vv.3-5 – Asking to be Spared the Fate of the Wicked
- vv. 6-7 Praise the LORD who Hears
 - vv.8-9 Praising the LORD Who is the Strength of His People

1 To You I will cry, O LORD my Rock: Do not be silent to me, Lest, if You are silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit.

When David was in trouble he knew where to go – to the LORD. David sang the original song: “Where could I go but to the LORD?” even if he didn't use those exact words.

LORD here is YHWH – the covenant God of Israel. The name “YHWH” is built on the word for “I AM”. It emphasizes the God is unchanging. His character never changes which is why He can be explicitly trusted. It also emphasizes Him as being “self-existent” and that He has life in Himself. This name YHWH is consistently connected to God's covenant commitment to Israel – so much so it is known as God's covenant name.

Slide # 2

Exodus 3:14–15 (NKJV)

14 And God said to Moses, “**I AM WHO I AM.**” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘**I AM** has sent me to you.’ ”

15 Moreover God said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.’

Note these connections. I AM is the LORD Who is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob which is code for covenant relationship because it was with these three patriarchs that God established and then affirmed a special covenant relationship we call “The Abrahamic Covenant”. This covenant is mentioned at least 9 different times in the book of Genesis (cf. Gen. 12:1-3, 7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-19; 18:18; 22:15-18; 26:3-5; 28:13-15; 35:9-12; 48:3-4). Everything in redemptive history builds on this.

God is a God of covenant relationship and this is the God that David cries out to. And David calls Him “my Rock”. The imagery of ROCK implies being David’s foundation, his security, his stability, his strength.

An amazing thing about the title ROCK is that in the whole of the OT this title is never used of mere man, but rather only for God. God ALONE is our ROCK! At least 12 times in the book of Psalms David referred to God as His ROCK.

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Psalm 18:46 (NKJV)

46 The LORD lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted.

The LORD was David’s Rock but at the moment he really needed the Rock to respond to his desperate plea.

When David says, “Do not be silent” he is saying he needs God to respond – to intervene in answer to prayer.

The situation is so desperate that David fears if God doesn’t move he will “be like those who go down to the pit” which is a way of saying he will die.

David felt if God didn’t move in answer to prayer he wouldn’t survive.

2 Hear the voice of my supplications When I cry to You, When I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary.

Again, David pleads with God to HEAR to his supplications – which is specific prayer requests made in desperation.

Lifting up the hands was the traditional posture of prayer for the Jews. And David's prayer is very focused in that it is directed very pointedly to God in His holy sanctuary in a very personal way.

The word "sanctuary" means "the innermost place" referring to the Holy of Holiest in the Tabernacle which is where the ark of the Covenant was located and on top of the ark was the mercy seat.

Slide # 4

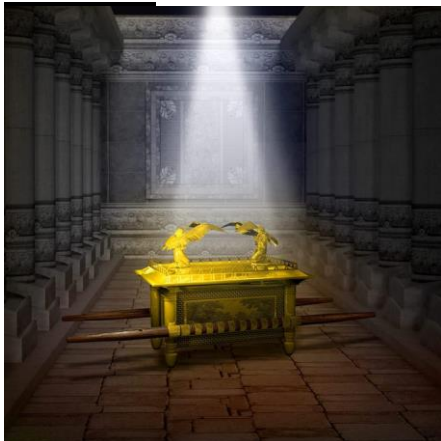
Exodus 26:33–34 (NKJV)

33 And you shall hang the veil from the clasps. Then you shall bring the **ark of the Testimony** in there, **behind the veil**. The veil shall be a divider for you between the holy place and the **Most Holy**.

34 You shall put the **mercy seat upon the ark** of the Testimony in the Most Holy.

The ark of the covenant was a chest that contained the Ten Commandments, the golden pot of manna (Ex. 16:4), and Aaron's rod the budded (Num. 17:1-13). On top of the ark was a lid called the mercy seat on which the divine presence rested. This was seen as God's throne room on earth. From this place God dispensed mercy to man when the blood of the atonement was sprinkled there.

Slide # 5



David pictures himself as seeking God in His very throne room. His interaction with God was all very personal in David's heart and mind.

3 Do not take me away with the wicked And with the workers of iniquity, Who speak peace to their neighbors, But evil is in their hearts.

Here is David's very specific request. He asks that he not be taken away (that is dragged away) with the wicked who indeed deserve their fate as workers of iniquity.

David specifically asked that God treat him differently from the wicked. These wicked people speak peace to their neighbors, but evil is in their hearts. They are total liars. They deceitfully play nice, but evil is in their hearts toward their neighbors.

Soft words, oily with pretended love, are the deceitful meshes of the infernal net in which Satan catches the precious life.

– *Charles Spurgeon*

4 Give them according to their deeds, And according to the wickedness of their endeavors; Give them according to the work of their hands; Render to them what they deserve.

David three different ways asks that God give them what they deserve. This is David's way of giving it over to God instead of trying to handle it in the flesh. Note David is asking God to deal with it – in keeping with His Word which shows that people reap according to how they have sown. I take it this verse (as seen in the surrounding context) assumes these people are hardened in their wicked ways to the point of no return.

Certainly, as we consider the whole counsel of God we pray for people to repentant and know the grace of God instead of getting what they deserve. However, if they refuse to repent, we know as we give it over to God in the end He will settle it.

Slide # 6

Romans 12:19 (NKJV)

19 Beloved, **do not avenge yourselves**, but rather **give place to wrath**; for it is written, "**Vengeance is Mine, I will repay**," says the Lord.

It's not our place to give people what they deserve, but rather give it over to God knowing that it's God's sovereign prerogative to repay. In the meantime we hope and pray they come to repentance.

Note David's repeated fourfold emphasis...

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- According to their deeds – v. 4
- The wickedness of their endeavors – v. 4
- According to the work of their hands – v. 4
- What they deserve – v. 4

And then David then tells us WHY he is praying this way....

5 Because they do not regard the works of the LORD, Nor the operation of His hands, He shall destroy them And not build them up.

David pictures these wicked people as those hardened against the LORD. They do not regard the works of the LORD, nor the operation of His hands.

Slide # 8

The phrase **work of His hands** is more commonly used for God's work of creation (19:1; 102:25) or for His work in delivering His people (143:5; Isa. 60:21). The second of these options seems more likely in this context where there is praise for Yahweh's help. - **HCSB**

Evidently these wicked people did not appreciate or recognize God's work of Savior in how He delivers His people. That is exceedingly offensive to the LORD. The greatest way God has chosen to bring glory to Himself is in His saving work! He is a Savior! This is what God does for His people. For people to mock this is blasphemous beyond measure.

No wonder David says, "Give them what they deserve". If they mock God's delivering power – then give them what they have coming.

David's conclusion is: "He [God] shall destroy them and not build them up." They are going down!

The wicked forget about God, but He does not forget about them. God promises to give those who reject Him what they deserve.

– David Guzik

Suddenly David's tone changes...

6 Blessed be the LORD, Because He has heard the voice of my supplications!

David at this point is confident that God has indeed heard his prayer. He is confident that God is going to work. He doesn't give specifics but he is assured of it.

And now David tells us the basis of his courage...

7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, And with my song I will praise Him.

Notice he doesn't say the Lord gives me strength, but rather the LORD is my strength. This was very personal for David!

The LORD Himself was the basis for David's position of strength whether it be changing his circumstances or changing his frame of mind. David was confident that the LORD was his shield, that is his protector. The LORD Himself was his strength and his protection.

“My dear friend, if you can say, ‘The Lord is my strength,’ you can bear anything and everything.” – **Charles Spurgeon**

And then David put his finger on the KEY to the whole matter saying, “My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped”. Right there is the whole deal! David learned this very early in life as seen when he went out to face the giant Goliath.

Slide # 9

1 Samuel 17:36–37 (NKJV)

36 Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.”

37 Moreover David said, “**The LORD**, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, **He will deliver me** from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you!”

David learned the secret that God honors faith. God strengthens those who trust in Him. David in faith said God was his Rock and then poured out his heart to God in prayer.

He came away from that prayer session full of faith saying, “My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped.”

We don't know if something had already happened or whether David is now confident that God is going to act, but certainly David at this point was full of faith.

Faith honors God and God honors faith – this is David's testimony!

Slide # 10

Isaiah 26:3–4 (NKJV)

3 You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.

4 **Trust** in the LORD forever, For **in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength.**

Isaiah 40:31 (NKJV)

31 But those who **wait** on the LORD Shall **renew their strength**; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

Faith moves the hands of God, and God's hands control the universe.
– **Warren Wiersbe**

David's testimony is that God has honored his trust and helped him. This has caused David's heart to rejoice and praise God with song. It's good to ask in faith but then as God answers we also need to praise Him. Always follow up answered prayer with praise. That is only appropriate!

Note life is all about the heart...

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v. 3 – evil is in their hearts

v. 7 – My heart trusted in Him...

Slide # 12

Proverbs 4:23 (LSB)

23 Guard your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.

This is the great distinction between the wicked and the righteous. It's all about the HEART! It's all in the matter of TRUST! God's people TRUST Him, they depend on Him, they rely on Him.

8 The LORD is their strength, And He is the saving refuge of His anointed.

David at this point seems to move from thinking in terms of himself and his own situation to that of the entire nation, and especially the godly among them.

The word "anointed" is often used in reference to the Davidic king, but in this context, it seems to refer corporately to the people of God. Note the language here "their strength" in verse 8 and then "Your people", "Your inheritance", "Shepherd them" and "bear them up" in verse 9. All of this suggests that at this point David is not just talking about himself.

Though His anointed can refer to the Davidic king of Israel (18:50; 20:6; 45:7), in this case it is parallel to "His people" and represents the nation as a whole (105:15; Hab. 3:13). - **HCSB**

Slide # 13

Habakkuk 3:13 (NKJV)

13 You went forth for the salvation of Your people, For salvation with Your Anointed. You struck the head from the house of the wicked, By laying bare from foundation to neck. Selah

God is the strength of His people Israel and the saving refuge of His special chosen people (His anointed).

And then David closes this Psalm with one final petition.

9 Save Your people, And bless Your inheritance; Shepherd them also, And bear them up forever.

Here David appropriately summarizes what God does for His people. He saves them and He blesses them with His favor.

God is in the delivering business! It's what He does. He saves/delivers His people. Of course, we think about salvation from sin, but then there is a whole host of delivering that God is constantly doing for His people. It seems we are constantly in some sort of trouble or difficulty and we constantly need God's delivering help.

Slide # 14

2 Corinthians 1:10 (NKJV)

10 who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us,

Paul's testimony was to God's delivering activity in regard to the past, present and future. He delivered, He is delivering, and He will deliver. This is what God does. We look to Him in faith and He delivers.

And He blesses His people in that His favor rests upon them.

John 1:16 (LSB)

16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.

God's people Israel here are called "His inheritance". This is the idea that they are His special and most precious possession (cf. Deut. 7:6-16; 9:29; 1 Sam. 10:1; Ps. 33:12; 94:5; Eph. 1:18).

Of all the nations and people groups on the earth, the people of Israel alone are identified as the inheritance of the Lord, indicating His unique relationship with them. The people of Israel are frequently identified as God's inheritance (Dt. 9:29; 32:9; Ps. 33:12; 74:2; Isa. 63:17; Jer. 10:16; 51:19). – ***The Moody Bible Commentary***

And then David asks that God "Shepherd them also". God's people need constant divine shepherding. They need His constant care and guidance.

A Sunday school teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the Bible - Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the chapter.

Little Rick was excited about the task - but he just couldn't remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line.

On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Ricky was so nervous. When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, "The Lord is my shepherd, and that's all I know."

In terms of essential truth – that's all you need to know!

Jesus is called "the good shepherd" (Jn. 10:11); "the Chief Shepherd" (1 Pet. 5:4); and "the great Shepherd" (Heb. 13:20).

The great question is this: Is He your Shepherd. That is the all important issue. How wonderful to know the LORD is MY Shepherd.

And finally David prays, "And bear them up forever". God's people constantly need His sustaining presence. We need it forever! If God ever let go of us we would be gone!

Praise the LORD for His eternal sustaining of His people. He bears us up no matter what trials and tribulations we go through and He will sustain us throughout eternity.

David began the Psalm by saying the LORD is his ROCK and this is true for all of God's people. He is our ROCK, our STRENGTH, our SHIELD, our SAVING REFUGE, our SHEPHERD, our SUSTAINER!

May we say with David, "My heart trusted in Him and I am helped". And if we can say this we can then also say, "My heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him."

Let's do that – let's stand together and sing His praises!