

Lesson Two – June 7

THE HEART OF HOLINESS

PSALM 18:19-30

Overview: David examined the new life he was given when God mercifully reached down and rescued him. It was a life that changed him, a life that brought him out of deep waters, and was more than he ever expected from God. God justified him, gave him a new heart, made him His child, and sanctified him. David began to live a faithful, blameless and pure life – a holy way of life illuminating the world -- as David prayed for God to keep his lamp burning turning darkness into light.

What is the central focus of this Psalm? What is David telling us?

David was in a place of desperation. Just listen to his words as he called out to God. “The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress, I called out to the Lord.” (Psalm 18:) And what did God do? “He reached down from on high and took hold of me; He drew me out of deep waters.....He brought me out into a spacious place; He rescued me because He delighted in me.” (Psalm 18:) David is thankful for God who reached down and saved him from his enemies simply because He delighted in David. Now with that backdrop, David begins to describe his new life. He begins by asking what the consequences of God saving him were. Beginning in verse 20 David begins describing the settled state of affairs between himself and the Lord. *“The Lord has dealt.....has rewarded me.....I have kept.....I have not done evil.....I have not turned away.....I have kept myself.....The Lord has rewarded me.* David begins to reflect on the fruit of salvation.

When David called out to God, He cried out in his helpless state as a convicted sinner, “God be merciful to me.” Then God answered in a way that was more than David had ever expected. God delivered him, God saved him, God justified him, God sanctified him, took away his old heart, replacing it with a new one, and made him a child of His. All David cried out for was help, to protect him from his enemies, but what a righteous answer came back from God. That is the way it is when we humbly cry out to Christ exalting Him in prayer, repenting, asking for Him to save us from our sin and help us overcome our plight. Immediately the

Lord begins to deal with us, to reward us, to give us a pure heart, to cleanse us, to take away the love for sinning, to live for Him. We don't want the former way of life anymore, and God rewards this burning desire for Him with purity, godliness and holy living. It is a holy way of life. And David tells us in verse 21 that he is "keeping the ways of the Lord." He will trust in the Lord with all his heart, soul and mind and will not turn from Him.

David is committed to a life of obedience, and a complete turn-around from who he once was to a life that honors and glorifies God. That is conversion and when we come to know Christ, we experience that same conversion. Conversion in the Bible is a turn-around, a change of direction, from ignoring God to serving God, from unbelief to faith, from serving sin to serving Holiness. David declares that as a result of his love for God and His law, he has not and will not turn away from God's decrees; that he has been blameless before God, and that he has and will keep himself free of sin. That is the Holiness that we can only attain when we surrender all to Jesus and become obedient trusting and loving God in a way that His righteousness will be seen through our words and deeds.

David continues to reflect on the rewards and turns to the blessing he enjoys as a result of the fruit of the rewards. This is the new life and David sees that everything comes from God. "All I have has come to me from God." That is the kind of God He is. He acknowledges that God is faithful and therefore He rewards faithful people, that God is blameless and therefore, He rewards those who are blameless, and that God is pure and rewards those who are pure. So, who does God bless? The faithful, the blameless, the pure. But keep in mind that God is not going to bless the shrewd.

David ends this section by praying to God to keep his light burning. "*You, O Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.*" (Verse 28) Is that not who we are called to be through our testimony and our walk with Jesus? When we are generous, patient, kind, obedient, gentle, loving and faithful, unashamed of the gospel, freely sharing it with others, then we are the kind of light David is referring to and we demonstrate our love for Jesus. It is important for us to look at our own walk and ask does my testimony, my actions and words, and the way I live for Jesus truly reflect Him so that His light will turn darkness into light. Our prayer should be "O Lord, keep my lamp burning."

Progression or Steps that lead to a deeper relationship with God

The progression to Holiness is beautifully presented by David as he finds himself in the midst of his enemies, with the cords of death wrapped around his feet. Searching for help, he cries out to God and repents of his sins. God hears his plea, and David was overwhelmed with what God provided. He took him under His wings, gave Him refuge, and shielded him. He transformed David giving him a new heart, turning him away from the things that pursued him, then God justified him, sanctified him, and gave him a new way of life. David became a child of God and God blessed him with a shield of protection, with the rewards of a pure, blameless and Holy life. This is the conversion of the Bible and these same steps are available to us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

How does this impact your walk with God?

What an amazing God we serve, and if you ever thought differently just look at the road travelled by David laid out in Psalm 18. You will find that David was not alone, God was there helping him, shielding him, interpreting the way, and making it plain for him to see. All this is the fruit of God's great goodness to David. He keeps David's light shining, gives him victory over all of his foes, helps him overcome the most difficult obstacles, helps him trust in God in the dark days, protecting him. Those are the blessings that David speaks of and those are the blessings that are available to those who cry out that they need help and turn to Jesus, our Savior, who transforms us and reshapes us to be like Him, releases us from the shackles of sin, renews our heart, and indwells within us His Spirit that we may walk as David did, knowing that God is present and through His love and the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the transforming power of Jesus Christ, our road is leading us to a Holy life that is pure, clean, and blameless. The rewards are astounding, and David makes that clear to us in verses 29 and 30. With God's help "I can advance against a troop, with my God I can scale a wall. God's way is perfect. The Lord's word is flawless, He shields all who take refuge in Him." God loved us so much that He sent His son to die on the cross and save us by believing in Him. Turn to Christ and know that the rewards are great and the blessings flow with grace. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Phil. 4:13 Can you identify the blessings that God has given to you?