

Scripture: Psalm 18:1-30

Text: Psalm 18:1-3 -

A Confession of Trust in the Lord

Dear brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ. The entire Psalm, Psalm 18, may be read in the light of the first three verses. You might say that the first three verses is a window by which we see the rest of this Psalm. It's a Psalm of trust, of confidence in the Lord – no matter how difficult or ugly things can get in life.

This is the believer's confession of trust in the Lord. It's a good confession for the beginning of a new year. We begin with our confession of trust in the LORD.

This is a Psalm of David. He is an older man by this time and he reflects on 反省 his life. In the ascription 归属 to Psalm 18, David testifies 证实 how the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and particularly from the hand of Saul. We see another form of this Psalm in 2 Samuel 22.

1.

The Psalmist begins by saying: *"I will love You, O LORD, my strength" [v. 1].* He declares his love for the LORD. **This is how trust in the Lord shows. It shows in love.** Not fear, for perfect love casts out fear [1 John 4:18]. The word for 'love' here suggests a strong, deep down heartfelt affection, a love that clings to His God. It's like the love of a child to his parent, or the love of a wife to her husband, borne out of a relationship of solid trust.

I remember earlier, when I began in the ministry in Woodstock, Ontario, I frequently visited an 80+ year old member of the congregation. He was a plain, simple man but often he spoke of the Lord, and when he did, tears would often flow from his eyes. His intimate love for the Lord showed. What struck me is that his love for the Lord showed even though he didn't have an easy life. His love for the Lord was often tested and tried by the hard, and very difficult things in his life.

It became clear to me that he could speak so intimately about the Lord because he knew the Lord's love for him, in spite of his failings. If you look at verse 1, you see the name L-O-R-D [capitalized]: This Name is God's covenant Name. By this name, He says, "I am your God; I am committed to you." This name indicates relationship, a relationship of love, grace, mercy; it's a relationship which engenders 造成 trust and love, as, for example, the relationship of a parent toward his child. A child tells of his love for his dad, his mom because he knows that his dad and mom love him.

It's not our love for God that holds us but His love for us that holds us and makes us say, "I love You, O LORD, my strength" He's my strength, because His love holds me, bears me up through thick and thin, in perplexity 困惑 and distress. The Bible says, *"in this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" [1 John 4:10].*

David trusted in God's love and it showed in his confession: "I love You, O LORD, my strength." His love for the Lord was often tested and tried. Just read 1 Samuel [especially chapters 23-26]. For many years he was a lone fugitive, an outlaw, wandering in the wilderness in Judea, always trying to escape from Saul who was pursuing him to hurt him and kill him. Saul was jealous of him and didn't want him to become king. So he would organize big 'David hunts' and pursue him with huge armies.

But David hid in the wilderness, behind many rugged rocks. There he would find safety. Other times he would run to mountains which served as fortresses or strongholds. Examples:

'And David stayed in the strongholds in the wilderness, and remained in the mountains in the Wilderness of Ziph. Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand' [1 Samuel 23:14; see also 23:22-23, 29; 24:1-2; 26:1,3].

At one point, when Saul was in pursuit of David. David saw him sleeping but instead of killing him, he took

his spear, woke him up and said, “for the king of Israel has come out to seek a flea, as when one hunts a partridge in the mountains” [26:20].

David was threatened by enemies, even harassed by his own people, tested and tried. God, who has all things in control, permits these things for His glory. Satan would love nothing better than to say, “Aha! Aha! I have shipwrecked 船舶失事 his faith. I have dashed his hopes. I have ruined his life.” But David, nearing the end of his life, could say, “I love you, LORD, my strength.” The Lord in His love and grace held him.

2

Look what God was for him [v.2], for His covenant child. Look how strong God’s love is for him. The Psalmist, the child of God, goes on to say in verse 2, “the LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.” This is his confession of trust: “He, the LORD, is my God,” he says.

He uses a diversity of names [8 in all!] to show that as the wicked have so many schemes to hurt, so God has many ways to help. Even in his complete helplessness, the Psalmist says ‘my trust is in Him’ and ‘I will trust in Him, His promises are ever reliable.’

- the LORD is his Rock – in the crags, in the cliffs and in the mountains
- God is his Fortress – He protects him from all assaults
- God is his Deliverer
- God is his Strength – the foundational rock, his Anchor [cf. Hebrews 6:18]
- God is his Shield – He wards off pursuit
- God is his Horn of Salvation-- He delivers him by goring his enemies. It’s an emblem of strength and power as seen in bulls and other powerful animals which use their horns
- God is his stronghold – this was a tower planted on a rocky place beyond the reach of enemies, from the heights of which you could look at their fury without fear.

Gods’ sure, unchanging promises, who He is, engenders, encourages trust. David recalls his own sad experiences in **verses 4-6**, “*the pangs of death surrounded me, and the floods of ungodliness made me afraid. The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, and my cry came before Him, even to His ears.*” He was at his wits end.

But the LORD intervenes for the weak, the needy and helpless, the poor and contrite in heart. **Verses 7-15** pictures God’s intervention 干涉, who is the horn of our salvation, as a storm: “*Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of the hills also quaked and were shaken, because He was angry . . . the LORD thundered from heaven, and the Most High uttered His voice, hailstones and coals of fire. He sent out arrows and scattered the foe, lightnings in abundance and He vanquished them...*[vv.7,13-14].

Then the Psalmist goes to speak of His deliverance 救援 in **verses 16-19**, “*He sent from above, He took me; He drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me, for they were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the LORD was my support. He also brought me out into a broad place; He delivered me because He delighted in me.*”

“The LORD . . . is my God!” says the Psalmist. If we do not trust Him, we leave the fortress. It is then we lack judgment and we become restless. [illustration: an anchored ship].

Those who believe, trust Him, will find that the Lord is their Shield and their Strength. There is no reason not to trust Him.

Some of you may have heard of Joni Eareckson Tada, a beautiful young lady whose life held a lot of promise. At 16 years of age she met with a diving accident. She became a quadriplegic in a wheel chair – unable to use her legs and arms ever again. In the early days of her paralysis, she spoke of how she tried to find her escape through assisted suicide. She was totally incapable of looking after herself. She became depressed and gave up all hope. “I clenched my fists at God” she said. Like David, she could say ‘the pangs of death surrounded me, and the floods of ungodliness made me afraid.’”

Over time, she learned to trust in Christ and the LORD overcame these cords of death in her life. She, today, confesses her trust in the LORD, the horn of her salvation, her strength, her sure hope. The Lord today is using her mouth to paint. She is an internationally renowned mouth artist, a speaker and an author of 17 books. She has accepted God’s plan in her paralysis. The Lord today is glorifying Himself in her life and through her, many others are coming to know the Lord, now confessing their trust in Him.

Look what God is for His people. Our call is to trust on Him, His unchanging love in Christ – in whatever life’s circumstances. David learned that: “*My God, my strength, in whom I will trust.*” There is no other. He trusted in His forgiving love for Him, that God would light his lamp, enlighten his darkness [v.28]. His love held him. That’s why he could say, “I love You, O LORD, my strength.”

3

Therefore, he says in verse 3, “I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies.” **This [v.3] is the evidence of my trust**, of my confidence in the Lord. The wicked turn away from Him; the wicked do not call upon Him, nor do they think He is worthy of their praise.

But not so the righteous; that is, those who trust in the Lord. Even in the day of trouble, the righteous may say, “I will call upon Him, He is worthy to be praised.” Why? Because He is trust-worthy [worthy of our trust]!. The Lord who is my God is faithful – faithful in all His ways. Never do I need to fear and despair. I only need to call upon Him. This is evidence of faith, as Hebrews 11 says is “*the evidence of things not seen*” {Hebrews 11:1}.

This Psalm is ultimately fulfilled in Christ, especially verse 2.. In our place, He said, “*I will put My trust in Him*” [Hebrews 2:13]. There on the cross, He suffered treason by one of his own, Judas, injustice from the mob, the Roman soldiers spit on Him, slapped Him and mocked Him, and Pilate let it all go. He suffered this, trusting His Father, so that we have a Stronghold, a Fortress in Him. Therefore I will call upon Him. “*Seeing that we have a great High Priest, who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession ... let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace...*” [Hebrews 4:16,18].

He deals righteously and is faithful to all who trust and obey. The rewards which result from trusting in Him are manifold. **Verses 20-30** show this, especially 28,30, “*For you light up my lamp; the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness ...As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the LORD is proven; He is a Shield to all who trust in Him.*” With confidence we conclude with a ‘so’. So.... “*So shall I be saved from my enemies.*”

Brothers and sisters, this Psalm teaches us to learn to trust the LORD. Trust grows; and, yes, sometimes wanes. It’s this kind of relationship, a relationship of trust that the Lord wants to encourage and nurture within us.

Let’s be encouraged to apply this lesson of trust and to know this God more and more – that we may **know Him** as our rock, fortress, deliverer, our God, strength, shield, horn of our salvation, and stronghold. And like that older man: may God’s love, a love which overwhelms 充溢 us in Christ, make our tears flow, saying “I love You, Lord, my strength.”