

“The Experience of Faith”  
Psalm 144  
(Preached at Trinity, December 15, 2013)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. This wonderful psalm is a medley of experiences from David’s life. With the exception of the final verses much of this psalm can be found in other parts of the Psalter. But we mustn’t presume that is mere repetition. Some expositors have wrongly presumed that this psalm was the work of some later author who compiled passages from other psalms for the benefit of David’s heirs to celebrate his victories.  
We must not doubt that this psalm comes from David’s pen.  
**Spurgeon** – “its language is of David, if ever language can belong to any man. As surely as we could say of any poem, this is of Tennyson, or of Longfellow, we may say, This is of David. Nothing but the disease which closes the eye to manifest fact and opens it to fancy, could have led learned critics to ascribe this song to anybody but David.”
2. David is describing *his* experiences with God. Notice the first couple verses:  
"Blessed *be* the LORD my strength"  
"which teacheth my hands to war, *and* my fingers to fight."  
<sup>2</sup> My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and *he* in whom I trust"
3. For David knowing God was not some intellectual idea of having an understanding of the Creator—of knowing of His existence and attributes. Of course, having a relationship with God can never be divorced from theology and doctrine. But knowing God is far more! For David his life was an intimate experience with God. It was full of feelings and emotion. The psalms of David are wonderful expressions of David’s heart towards God.  
**Jonathan Edwards** wrote of the psalms: “Those holy songs are nothing else but the outpourings of devout and holy emotion. In them we see a humble and fervent love of god, admiration of His glorious perfections and wonderful works, and desires and thirstings of the soul towards Him” (*The Experience that Counts*, p.28)
4. This is the testimony of every child of God. This is the experience of faith. It is the confidence that we are God’s people – and He is our God. It is to know Him and experience life in Him.
  - A. Every child of God has this personal experience with Him. This is the covenant blessing of grace.  
**Leviticus 26:12 KJV** - "And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people."  
**Jeremiah 31:33 KJV** - "But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."
  - B. We can all repeat the words of the Apostle Thomas upon recognizing Christ, “My Lord and My God.”

- C. David frequently expressed this covenant relationship with his God  
**Psalm 86:12 KJV** - "I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore."
- D. David says at the end of this psalm,  
**Psalm 144:15 KJV** - "happy *is that* people, whose God *is the LORD*."
- E. We live in a day of shallow professions of Christ which is characterized by a shallow relationship with Christ.  
 Erroll Hulse: "When people come easily to Christ their appreciation is not always very strong and there can be a tendency to take things for granted. A shallow experience is reflected in an unwillingness to sacrifice or to serve. Little enthusiasm is shown about prayer meetings or worship services."
5. As we consider this experience of faith I'll divide the psalm into three sections:
- I. The Experience of God's dominion in our life – **Verses 1-4**
  - II. The Experience of God's deliverance in our battles – **Verses 5-11**
  - III. The Experience of God's delight in blessing His people – **Verses 12-15**
- I. The Experience of God's dominion in our life – **Verses 1-4**
- A. God is with us in every dimension of our life
    1. He provides richly for us
    2. He equips us for every aspect of our life
  - B. David brings to mind chiefly the experience of God's dominion in vocation
    1. By vocation we are to understand our particular calling
    2. Our calling is that place in our life today through which we serve God and display His glory upon the earth.
      - a. The situation of our vocation may change many times in our life but the nature of it remains constant and unchanging.
      - b. Your vocation today is to glorify Him and serve Him where you are today. There are micro callings and macro callings.
      - c. It is our assignment today to be joyful in Him and display His glory as we serve Him and serve our fellow man.
    3. God uniquely equips us for our vocation – David was a king and military leader. He was a warrior.
      - a. David was equipped by God for this calling  
**Verse 1** "which teacheth my hands to war, *and* my fingers to fight"
      - b. David's confidence in his calling was in the God who called him  
**Verse 2** – The word for "goodness" is רַחֲמִים
      - c. This all expresses the richness of David's relationship with God. God loved him but also God was his love.
    4. David was made a leader – the people followed him.  
**Verse 2** - "who subdueth my people under me."  
      - a. Leadership is both earned and received
      - b. A leader has to earn the respect and confidence of those under him but God also grants him favor
  - C. David was humbled by God's care and oversight
    1. This is the balance taught from beginning to end in the Bible – God's sufficiency and our weakness.

2. **Verse 3** is similar to David's words in **Psalm 8**  
**Psalm 8:3-4 KJV** - "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; <sup>4</sup> What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

This is not simply copying the words of a previous psalm. It is the consistent expression of David's heart.

3. We are amazed at God's care of us. Who can fathom our infinite eternal God taking notice of us?
- a. All the nations of the earth are but a speck in God's eyes.  
**Isaiah 40:15 KJV** - "Behold, the nations *are* as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing."
  - b. David likens humanity as a shadow that passes over the landscape and is gone with no sign that it was ever there.
  - c. And yet, God embraces us as His own

D. This was David's experience with God.

1. God called him, equipped him, loved him.  
 Not only did God strengthen him. God *was* his strength.  
**Psalm 144:1 KJV** - "Blessed *be* the LORD my strength"  
 The word actually means "Rock." For David God was everything.
2. The same is true of God's people today. Is God everything in your life? We often describe in terms of God's immensity. Is God huge in your life? Do you serve a big God?

## II. The Experience of God's deliverance in our battles – **Verses 5-11**

- A. After expressing his absolute confidence in God, David prays for God's mighty intervention – **Verses 5-6** – "Bow the heavens and come down."
1. David uses words that express God's immensity  
 Smoking mounts, lightning bolts, arrows being shot and the enemies being destroyed.  
**Verse 5** has a similar tone as that of Isaiah  
**Isaiah 64:1 KJV** - "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence"
  2. This is the confidence of God's people. We hear Isaiah again.  
**Isaiah 54:17 KJV** - "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness *is* of me, saith the LORD."
  3. David prays for God to keep him separate from the wicked of this world – **Verses 7-11**  
**Psalm 144:11 KJV** - "Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood"

- a. God's people are always a separate people  
**2 Corinthians 6:17-18 KJV** - "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, <sup>18</sup> And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
      - b. David refers to them as "strange children" – **Verses 7, 11**  
 From their tongues come vanity and lies
    - B. What a beautiful picture of God's separate people – **Verses 9-10**  
 We have experienced a glorious new life and a heart of praise.  
**Psalms 144:9 KJV** - "I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery *and* an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee."
      - 1. What a contrast – the world speaks vanity and lies. We sing forth God's praises.
      - 2. Regeneration makes all things new – our music is also transformed  
**Spurgeon** – "Let us not present old worn-out praise, but put life and soul and heart into every song, since we have new mercies every day and see new beauties in the work and word of our Lord."  
**Thomas Watson** – "Wicked men are bound to praise God, but they are not fit to praise him. None but a living Christian can tune God's praise. The godly alone are fit to be choristers in God's praises."
- III. The Experience of God's delight in blessing His people – **Verses 12-15**  
 We are the *objects* of God's delight. David was in continual warfare and continual anger, yet he always maintained the knowledge of the privilege of being one of God's people.
  - A. These verses describe great prosperity
    - 1. **Verse 12** – a fruitful forest. That their young sons might bear the strength of an oak. That their young daughters might be as solid and resolute as corner stones—and as beautiful as a palace.
      - a. God's people enjoy the blessings of God upon their families
      - b. Does this mean that God's people never suffer weakness nor infirmity? No, but the families of God's people enjoy great strength
    - 2. **Verse 13** speaks of material prosperity
      - a. David describes full barns and fruitful livestock. He describes ever need met so that there is no need for complaint
      - b. Does this mean that God's people never suffer material poverty? No, but the common experience of God's people is that God richly provides for His own  
**Psalms 37:25 KJV** - "I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."
    - 3. **Verse 14** speaks of strength and security – of oxen and of safety  
**Psalms 144:14 KJV** - "*that there be* no breaking in, nor going out" No fear from thieves or robberies. The idea is that God's people need not live in a state of fear.

4. Finally, he describes the great happiness of those who enjoy such blessings – and who these people are  
**Psalm 144:15 KJV** - "Happy *is that* people, that is in such a case: *yea, happy is that* people, whose God *is* the LORD."
- B. We must recognize the glorious blessing of being God's people.
1. God delights in His people and showers His blessings upon them.
  2. They enjoy true strength and beauty.  
 Like the daughters of the king  
**Psalm 45:13 KJV** - "The king's daughter *is* all glorious within: her clothing *is* of wrought gold."
  3. Our families enjoy strength and stability. This is because they are built upon the solid foundation of God's Word.  
 They enjoy true wealth and true blessings  
**Psalm 1:1-3 KJV** - "Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. <sup>2</sup> But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. <sup>3</sup> And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."
  4. They enjoy true contentment  
**Psalm 144:14 KJV** - "that *there be* no complaining in our streets."
  5. God's people know true happiness - אֲשֶׁר  
**Psalm 144:15 KJV** - "Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God *is* the LORD."
    - a. What is the source of true happiness?
    - b. The people of this world describe material wealth as the source of happiness. They throw themselves after acquiring its dainties.
    - c. The Bible describes true happiness differently:  
Happy is that people, whose God *is* the LORD."
    - d. The people of this world boast in their material possessions. God's people have a higher boast.  
**Jeremiah 9:23-24** – "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD."

#### Conclusion:

1. Salvation is a glorious experience with God. We have been awakened to His presence in our lives. We have been awakened to the glory of the excellence of His being.
2. We enjoy the experience of knowing Him  
 Of experiencing God's dominion in our life  
 Of experiencing God's deliverance in our battles  
 Of experiencing God's delight in blessing us
3. We are the people of God. We enjoy the experience of being His people.