

“God Our Rock – Part 1”
Psalm 18
(Preached at Trinity, January 24, 2010)

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. All of us as Christians have faced times of difficulty and all of us have gone to God in prayer and all of us have found Him mighty. He has been a mighty Rock when everything else seemed to be crumbling.
2. All of God’s people experience God’s mighty power. Moses wrote after God’s deliverance of Israel from the Egyptians:
Exodus 15:11 – “Who *is* like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who *is* like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful *in* praises, doing wonders?”
3. This is the focus of this Psalm.
David had seen many times of trouble in his life, many enemies, many battles, many brushes with death. Yet God always came as his great Deliverer.
4. As we come to this Psalm one of the first things we notice is its length. It’s the longest psalm we’ve dealt with so far. In fact the **18th Psalm** is the fourth longest psalm.
5. Notice also the length of the superscription.
 - A. It was written to be given to the chief musician to be sung by God’s people in worship.
 - B. It is a psalm of David. This psalm was written while David was king. But notice David refers to himself as “the servant of the Lord.” There is no mention of his kingship which implies that he placed higher value upon being a servant of God than a king.
 - C. And notice it was written to God. The purpose is that God might receive praise. It was written in praise of God for His great deliverance from David’s enemies. Notice David is referring to all of his enemies and he faced many in the course of his life.
 - Of course, there was Saul. 1 Samuel tells the story of how Saul burned with jealousy against David that ultimately led him to seek David’s life. David fled into the wilderness where he was protected by God’s providential care. More than once David had opportunity to kill Saul but did not. In the end Saul died from his own hand
 - During his years as king God gave him numerous victories over assaulting nations. 2 Samuel describes David’s victories over the Philistines, Moabites, Arameans of Damascus, and the Edomites.
 - Finally, God delivered David from the hand of his own son, Absalom. Absalom plotted to overthrow the throne of his father and seize the throne for himself. David once again was forced to flee from Jerusalem. God once again defended David and Absalom was killed to David’s great grief.
6. The greater part of this psalm is repeated in **2 Samuel 22** – David’s great praise of God for His redeeming grace.

7. The **18th Psalm** is divided into several sections:
 - In **Verses 1-3** David sings forth his great praise to God for God's great deliverance
 - In **Verses 4-19** David describes his deliverance using rich poetic pictures and symbols
 - In **Verses 20-28** David states with confidence that God's acted justly in delivering him
 - In **Verses 29-45** David again describes his deliverance and anticipates future deliverances
 - In **Verses 46-50** David concludes by once again singing forth the praises of God. This last section also has Messianic overtones.
 8. Tonight, I want to focus upon the first section, and then next week we'll cover the rest of the psalm
- I. **Verses 1-3** - David sings forth his great praise to God for His deliverance.
 - A. David begins by expressing his love for God

Psalm 18:1 – "I will love thee, O LORD, my strength."

 1. The word here is רַחֵם (racham) – it refers to the deepest love. Spurgeon describes this love as being "intensely forcible"
David was a king. He could have had anything his heart desired. But his desire was for God.
 2. This is truly the heart of religion – to love God. This is the chief of God's demands upon His people – indeed upon all men.
Deuteronomy 6:4-5 – "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: ⁵ And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."
Matthew 22:37-38 – "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment."
 3. We obey Him because we love Him. Love is our motive. Paul said without this love all of our other religious activities are meaningless.
NAS **1 Corinthians 13:1** – "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing."
 - B. David then uses a series of metaphors to describe God as his Deliverer (Strength, Rock, Fortress, Deliverer, Buckler, Horn of my Salvation, High Tower)
 1. One of the greatest of these is that the Lord was David's Rock.
We'll look at this first and then look at the others.
 - a. David uses it three different times in this psalm
Psalm 18:2 – "The LORD *is* my rock"
Psalm 18:31 – "who *is* a rock save our God?"
Psalm 18:46 – "blessed *be* my rock"
 - b. The metaphor of a Rock is used various ways to describe God's great defense
 2. First, it describes God as a great shelter for His people
 - a. In the hot desert the sun could be merciless. In the spring a light carpet of green grass would appear but in just a few weeks it would be scorched by the sun.
 - b. In the shade of a large rock, however, there was protection. Life could continue under the rock's protection.

- c. Isaiah described such a Rock
Isaiah 32:1-2 – “Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. ² And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.”
 - 3. Second, it portrayed God as a refuge
 - a. When David was forced to flee the mountains of the wilderness provided safety and protection. The rocks provided a hiding place, a place of concealment and security.
 - b. And David could take advantage of the height of some great rock to look down upon his enemies.
 - 4. Third, it portrayed God as a sure foundation. It speaks of firmness; of that which is solid and cannot be moved.
 - a. Listen to **Psalm 62**
Psalm 62:2 – “He only *is* my rock and my salvation; *he is* my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.”
 - b. Listen to **Psalm 40**
Psalm 40:2 – “He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and* established my goings.”
 - c. The New Testament describes Jesus as such a Rock – a sure foundation.
Matt. 7:24-27 – “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: ²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. ²⁶ And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: ²⁷ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”
- C. Jesus is our Rock - He is a sure foundation
Isaiah 28:16 – “Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.”
- 1. Jesus is the foundation of the Gospel.
1 Corinthians 3:11 – “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”
 - 2. Jesus is our Rock. We stand stand fast in Him.
 We are people founded upon a Rock
 - a. Christians are defined by our firmness – we stand, we persevere
Ephesians 6:13-14 – “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand therefore . . .”

- b. In Christ we stand firm, resolute, unmovable
 My hope is built on nothing less
 Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
 I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
 But wholly trust in Jesus' Name.

Refrain

On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
 All other ground is sinking sand;
 All other ground is sinking sand.

II. The other metaphors

(Strength, Fortress, Deliverer, Buckler, Horn of my Salvation, High Tower)

A. God is our Strength

1. Our strength is not our own
Ephesians 6:10 – “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”
2. This is the essence of our faith. Of Abraham we read:
Romans 4:20 – “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;”
3. The man who trusts God finds strength that is beyond himself
Psalm 112:1 – “Blessed *is* the man *that* feareth the LORD, *that* delighteth greatly in his commandments.”
 Verse 6 “Surely he shall not be moved”
 Verse 7 “He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.”
 Verse 8 “His heart *is* established, he shall not be afraid”

B. God is our Fortress

1. A Fortress is an impenetrable stronghold
2. Those who are in Christ are protected by His mighty arm – nothing shall separate us from His love.
3. Jesus described it as being in the Father's hand
John 10:29 – “My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.”

C. God is our Deliverer

1. God is our rescuer – Jesus Christ as our Redeemer rescued from the stronghold of Satan. He rescued us from the bondage of sin.
2. He continues to rescue us when we cry out to Him
 This was often David's confidence
Psalm 38:22 – “Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.”
Psalm 40:13 – “Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me.”
Psalm 70:1 – “*Make haste*, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O LORD.”
Psalm 109:26 – “Help me, O LORD my God: O save me according to thy mercy:”

D. God is our Buckler – a buckler is a shield

1. Our shield of faith is actually God – we trust in Him
2. In Christ we are well equipped for battle. But we never go into battle alone

3. As we stand in God's shadow all of Satan's fiery arrows fall to the ground quenched.
James 4:7 – "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
- E. God is the Horn of our salvation
1. This metaphor is seen several times in Scripture. The horn had important significance.
 2. The word for horn קֶרֶן (qeren) is often used in reference to strength
1 Samuel 2:1 – "And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation."
 3. An accused and condemned man was able to take hold of the horns of the altar for protection.
1 Kings 1:50 And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.
 4. The altar in the Tabernacle had horns on each corner and the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled upon them as a reminder of God's power in deliverance.
 5. Christ is the horn of our salvation. We hold on to Him. Christ is our comfort and assurance.
- F. God is our High Tower
1. God is like a high tower from which a city is guarded from attack. He is not only a high tower, He is also a strong tower.
Psalms 61:3 – "For thou hast been a shelter for me, *and* a strong tower from the enemy."
 2. In Christ we rise above our enemies. In our High Tower they can't touch us.
Proverbs 18:10 – "The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."

Conclusion:

1. David's point is clear. God is sufficient. He had always proven Himself sufficient in David's life.
2. He is our sufficient Deliverer. Have you trusted yourself to Him?
3. He is also sufficient to deliver us from earthly trials. If you have trusted your soul to Him have you not also trusted your life?
NAS **Philippians 4:6-7** – "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."