

Psalm 116: 1-9; “I love the Lord Because”, A Sermon Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on May 10th, 2020, during the time of the Coronavirus restrictions.

I would like to speak to you this afternoon about loving the Lord. Do you love the Lord? Why do you love Him? King David, in this psalm tells us his own spiritual experience and how he found peace and rest for his troubled soul. “Do I love the Lord” is a most important question which each person should ask themselves, because as you answer it in your heart, it will determine the outcome of your entire life and where you will spend eternity. For it says in Psalm 145, verse 20, “The Lord preserves (or will keep) all who love Him, but all of the wicked He will destroy. A wicked person, according to the Bible, is not simply a person who is grossly sinning against the Lord. He or she is not necessarily an angry or a violent person. They are not necessarily a person who is dealing drugs and living immorally.

A wicked person, according to the Bible is a person who neglects or refuses to love God and His Son Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul in 1st Corinthians 16, verse 21, says: “If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.” The psalmist David knew why he loved the Lord. He loved the Lord because He, first of all, was the One who had delivered his soul from death. He loved the Lord, secondly, because He delivered his eyes from tears. And he loved the Lord because he delivered his feet from falling so that he could walk before the Lord in the land of the living. Let’s see if we can understand these statements better.

1st of all – David loved the Lord because He was the One who had delivered his soul from death.

Now, it is not certain upon what occasion David wrote this psalm but it seems to fit the occasion where Absalom, David’s own son, tried to take the kingdom away from David, and David was forced to flee Jerusalem for a time. He was not certain that he would ever be able to return; He was not certain whether he would live or die. These things had come about, in part, because of his past sin with Bathsheba, his having taken another man’s wife and having lain with her, and she became pregnant, he then tried to cover up his sin. In the attempt to cover up his sin, he ended up arranging for the killing of her husband by ordering him to go down to spend time with Bathsheba. He thought that this would make Uriah look like he was the father of the child. But Uriah was a faithful man and would not go.

After David was confronted with his sin by the prophet Nathan, he confessed his sin to the Lord, and the Lord forgave him, but still there were many disciplinary consequences which came to him from the Lord. This was one of them. Having been driven outside of Jerusalem, with many of the people who were still loyal to him, he prayed to the Lord and asked that the counsel of Ahithophel would be turned into foolishness. Ahithophel had been David’s trusted counsel, but he had defected to Absalom when Absalom rebelled against his father and wanted to take over the throne. David’s prayer was heard and Absalom ended up taking the counsel of another one of David counselors; this one, a trusted counselor named Hushai.

This man went to Absalom and gave him such compelling advice, that it actually led to David’s being delivered from those trying to kill him, because the advice of Ahithophel was not followed. Ahithophel went and hanged himself when he saw that his counsel was not followed, and David’s son Absalom died in the attempted rebellion. And so, David was able to return to Jerusalem. This, I believe, is what led David to say, “I love the Lord, because He has heard My voice and my supplications.” He had been delivered from death, and could return to his rest in Jerusalem where he would be able once again to worship the Lord whom he loved. But we need to go further than this, and to notice that the text in verse 8 says – “For You have delivered my

soul from death.” It is not simply that David’s physical life was delivered in this episode that I just related to you. It was that his soul was rescued from eternal death.

O, I know that David was the man after God’s own heart, but David had committed sins which were worthy of his being cast away forever from God’s presence. His assurance of his salvation had been so greatly weakened that he prayed in Psalm 51 – “Cast me not away from your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit away from me.” In Psalm 39, verse 10, he prayed – “Remove Your plague from me; I am consumed by the blow of Your hand.” “When with rebukes You correct man for iniquity, You make his beauty melt away like a moth.” “Surely every man is a vapor.”

We need to understand the nature of David’s prayer in verses 3 and 4. It was the prayer of a man who had found trouble and sorrow. “The pains of death surrounded me, and the pangs of Sheol (or fears of hell) surrounded him.” Even though he was one of God’s saints, still, at this point, he felt that perhaps he might lose his salvation. What did he do? Did he give up? Did he contemplate suicide as his predecessor Saul did, and then committed it? No, he prayed. And the Lord delivered him; not only from physical death, but he delivered his soul also from death. All the sins which we ever commit have the seeds of death in them, but the Lord delivers us from them; from so great a weight of sin and death, not only at our first being converted to Christ, but also when we fall into our worst sins.

Jesus Christ died so that we might live. He died so that we might be forgiven. He died to be able to heal our sin-sick souls. How does He do this? He answers the prayers, the cries of the sinner, and the cries of his saints as well. How many times does the Christian fall in unbelief during his life? Probably many thousands of times. If the Christian’s salvation depended upon his keeping himself, he would never be able to do it. He would lose his salvation because of unbelief alone, let alone the many others sins and mental and emotional difficulties that he faces every day. But the Lord is the Keeper of our souls, each and every person who is trusting in Jesus Christ for salvation.

Let me encourage you, those of you who are growing older and you think that you feel the pains of death surrounding you; perhaps you even feel the distresses that come to those who are uncertain of their spiritual salvation and wonder whether you are going to heaven or hell. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. He came to be the deliverer of His people from all of their sins. It is this same God who sent the Lord Jesus, out of His great love to helpless and care-worn sinners, to deliver their souls from death. Isaiah 53, verse 10 says, “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief.” “When You make His soul and offering for sin.” That is what the Father God did; He made the soul of the Lord Jesus, His only-Begotten Son, an offering for sin. Verse 12 says, “Because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many.”

Let me ask you if you have come to know that Christ has born your sins? Have you taken Him to be your Savior? Have you known His compassion and His tender mercies, His providential care over you, delivering your life from all distress? He does all of this when you call upon His name. You are then able to say, “I love the Lord because He has heard my voice and my supplications” Therefore, I will call upon Him as long as I live.” You see, you can tell whether you are a true Christian or not by whether you pray to God; whether you love Him because He hears your voice, and whether you will continue to pray at home, and at work, and at church as long as you live. He delivers your soul through a thousand situations which would undo you forever if you did not simply trust in Him. O what a mighty privilege it is to call upon the name of Jesus.

Now 2nd – David loved the Lord because He was the One who had delivered His eyes from tears.

Verse 8 – “For You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears....” The reason that we cry is because we find that we cannot change ourselves or our situation in life. A further reason that we cry is because we realize that we have lost someone or something which has given us joy and meaning in life. I want you to understand, dear ones listening to me, that the Lord Jesus Christ pays attention to all of the tears which are shed by those who are trusting in Him. And He also pays attention to all of the tears that are cried in sorrow over the sins that penitent sinners cry; those people who realize that they need a Savior, and want to find Him. David knew that He needed a Savior when he was with the Philistines in Gath. It says in Psalm 56: 8 – “You number my wanderings; put my tears in Your bottle; are they not in Your book?”

David knew that he could not change things in the situation that he was in, of Saul trying to kill him, but he knew that God could. He says in verse 9 of Psalm 56 – “When I cry out to You, then my enemies will turn back; this I know because God is for me.” “In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid.” “What can man do to me?” Let me ask you this afternoon if you know that God is for you? If you believe in Jesus, He is for you, and He will cause all of your enemies to turn back from you; not only people, but also sin, and death, and the grave. You probably remember how Jesus wept when He came to the tomb of Lazarus in John Chapter 11. Jesus was sympathizing with the great grief that Mary and Martha felt for their brother who had died. But He was not weeping over the fact that He could not do anything about it.

It says in John 11: 38 that as He drew near the tomb that He was “again groaning in Himself”. Why would Jesus be groaning? Was it that He doubted that He could do anything for Lazarus and was not certain of His own power? No, I believe that Jesus groaned because of the unbelief of the people around Him who were saying, “Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?” Yes He certainly could have, but He wanted to show them something greater; he want to show them something more of the greatness of His power. And so He said, “Take away the stone”. And Martha said to Him, Lord by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.” “And Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?”

You see, this is one of the great lessons of this message: If you believe you will see the glory of God. You will behold the glory of God doing a work in your heart when you pray for Jesus to become your Savior and Lord. This is the reason why you will be able to say, “I love the Lord because He hears my voice and my supplications. Jesus reads the prayers of every heart. Jesus reads your tears and puts them in His bottle, and He writes them in His book of remembrance. Jesus will someday raise all the dead. And all those who have trusted in Jesus shall be raised to eternal glory and blessedness. And it says there, in the book of Revelation, chapter 21, verse 4, that He will wipe away all of your tears. And it says in Psalm 30, verse 5 – “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy will come in the morning”; that is, on the morn of the resurrection of all the dead.

Now 3rd – David loved the Lord because the Lord delivered his feet from falling, so that he could walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

I want you to see, that if you are trusting in Jesus that you can never possibly lose your salvation, because you are kept by God. David’s feet falling would mean his falling so as not to be able to get up again spiritually. But David was able to get up again spiritually after his fall into sin with Bathsheba. Why? Because he was one of God’s Elect, and it was because of the greatness of God’s grace to him through the Christ, that the Lord would keep His soul all through his life, and all the way to glory. Jude verse 24 says, “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever more.” You see, when you believe in Jesus, you enter in to a rest for your soul.

“Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yes our God is merciful.” “The Lord preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me.” “Return to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.”

That is what David said after he was forgiven and restored after his sin with Bathsheba. God, through the future sacrifice of Jesus Christ, delivered David from stumbling and falling eternally. This is what God does for all of his Elect people; His dear children. Their salvation does not depend upon their perseverance in the faith. Rather, a Christian will persevere in their faith to the end of their life because they are being upheld in their faith day by day, by the grace of Christ. Jesus says to the apostle Peter in Luke 22: 32 - “I have prayed for you, Peter, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” Jesus did not say to him, and if you return to Me, He said “when you have returned to Me”. Jesus said this to Peter right before his greatest fall. And it is this kind of effectual preservative grace which is the reason that both Peter and David could “walk before the Lord in the land of the living”. The Lord was merciful to them and He heard the voice of their supplications; therefore they would call upon Him as long as they lived. What about you? Do you love the Lord because He has heard your voice and your supplications? Will you call upon Him as long as you live?