

01/01/18

## Our Trust In God... The Source Of Security

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life;  
Whom shall I dread?" (Psa.27:1)

A feeling of safety is one of mankind's most basic needs, as humans strive for financial, emotional and physical security. Yet all feelings of well-being are ultimately related to one's sense of "spiritual security." David, the author of this psalm, understood that peace of mind is an outgrowth of a proper relationship with God. Therefore, faith is the first line of defense for both body and soul. When confronting trouble David finds solace in pondering the protection that God affords him. I have found three (3) ways that he sees God supporting him in times of trouble. First, as we see in today's verse, he sees the Lord as his light in times of darkness. When we experience adversity, it is one of those "can't see the forest for the trees" things. When things are humming along, our self-assurance is at its peak. but when things start to unravel, doubt and fear can assail us. God's instructions see us through those dark times. Secondly, David calls God his salvation... When it seems that we cannot extricate ourselves from threatening circumstances, God is there, front and center... In the Old Testament, we can look at the Israelites escape from Egypt through the Red Sea, and David's epic battle with Goliath as evidences. Thirdly, Davis refers to the Lord as the strength of his life... Although God provides the truth to light the path for his people, they also need emotional fortitude to follow God's instruction. Although we have been liberated from seemingly hopeless situations, we also need the the strength to seize moments of opportunity when they arise... Please read Psalm 27 this week and meditate upon it. Hopefully we will find some great nuggets of wisdom there this week....

Have a great start to your week... Begin it with a RAK or two.... Love mark  
Phil.4:11

01/02/18

## The Source Of Insecurity

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength in my life;  
Of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psa.27:1).

Here's my big question of the day.... Why do some fail to live courageously and behave responsibly despite all God has done to secure their future? Are there people in your life whose promises you believe in more than others? Of course there are... Why? Simply because we

have more faith in them. David understood that succumbing to fear was due to a lack of faith.

When Jesus and His disciples were on the Sea of Galilee, a fierce storm came up and His disciples trembled with fear. Jesus was sleeping and they awoke Him saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" Jesus' response was succinct and to the point; "You of little faith, why are you so afraid? Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm" (Matt.6:25-26). To those who fretted over their financial circumstances he admonished, "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you? O you of little faith" (Matt.6:30). When a person ignores the enlightenment provided by God's Word, doubts His sufficiency to save, or has misgivings about His ability to provide strength, the result will not be surprising at all... In view of the support God provides His people, David asks incredulously in today's verse, "whom shall I fear?" I think the message here is that fear is rooted in false beliefs or uncertainty. Those who know God's personality, power and promises do not cower in fear when they face adversity. A powerful belief in God's love, integrity and sufficiency should chase away the specters of doom that can terrorize the minds of the timid and keep them from moving forward in a constructive manner with their lives. The apostle Paul's teaching on this should seal the deal for us; "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose" (Rom.8:28). We are to be are those people....

Have a great day.... Do good and give God the credit... Love  
Phil.4:11

mark

01/04/18

Seeking His Face... Praising With Joy

"And now my head will be lifted up above my enemies around me, I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy. I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Lord..... When you said, 'Seek My face,' my heart said to You, 'Your face, O Lord, I shall seek' " (Psa.27:6 & 8).

What is your reaction when someone does something really special for you? Are you appreciative? flabbergasted? awed? In what way do you respond? In view of God's care for His people, David feels compelled by awe and gratitude to worship the Lord. As we see in today's verses, after offering the appropriate sacrifices, David begins to sing praises to the Lord... With that said, in view of God's providential care for us, Christians continue to sing praises to the Lord today. Perhaps drawing on David's figure of sacrifice and song, the writer of the New Testament book of Hebrews implores its readers this way; "Through Him then, let us continue to offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of the lips that give thanks to His name." To up the stakes a bit higher he writes; "And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased" (Heb.13:15-16). I find that there are fewer things in life more joyful than releasing the spiritual emotions that swell within one's heart by extolling God in the exalted

language of music. A person does not need to have a wonderful singing voice to feel those emotions and express them. To go along with these songs of admiration, David makes another plea to God which I find intriguing... When you said, 'Seek My face,' my heart said to You, 'Your face, O Lord, I shall seek.' David surely wrote these things when he was going through some tough times... When beset by our own problems, Christians should find encouragement from David's contagious optimism. No matter what the age, the key to banishing fear and building faith is trusting in the Lord. Regardless of circumstances and appearances to the contrary, as God's people we can count on Him to guard our souls and do us good all of our lives...

Have a great day... Let His light shine through us... Love mark  
Phil.4:11

01/05/18  
Rooted And Grounded In Love

"So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God" (Eph.3:17-19).

It may be rightly said that religious impulses, whatever the religion may be, revolve around two matters; They are origin and culmination... Where am I going with this? Here are the two basic questions; How did it begin? Where is it going? When scientists speculate on the beginnings of the universe, they may bring a few scraps of information to the table, but they are dealing with religious issues. There is small wonder that when a theory of origin gains traction for a year or so, it is then replaced by another. If the scientific enlightenment says anything, it has demonstrated that some questions may be too big for scientists to handle. Like those questions of origin, those having to do with culmination are pure speculation too... How and when will it all end? If we are to know anything about origin and culmination, I believe that it must come by means of revelation. The One who created it is the One who will call it to an end. Origin and culmination require reflection on God. At one far extreme, there may be those who relegate God as being a great mathematician in the sky... They might argue that God created the universe for His own amusement, and withdrew. All we can know about God, they say, is through reason and philosophy. Others hope to learn of God subjectively, by means of personal experience. The apostle Paul took an "in between" approach. People can learn of God through observation and reason, and people know God because He lives within them. No one can be a worshiper of God without the engagement of emotions, and Paul prays in today's verses that his readers would comprehend God. Love and faith engage the emotions, but to really comprehend God, they must read and understand what He has said about Himself. Christian living is more than an occasional experience. Believers must know God from His self-revelation. They must come to comprehend God's purposes and plan. A big part of this is stated by Paul in today's verses, as they are to be rooted and grounded in love...

Have a great day.... T G I F Today God Is First  
mark Phil.4:11

Love

01/09/18

God Is Our Refuge... The Lord Of Peace

"There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, The holy dwelling places of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved, God will help her when morning dawns" (Psa.46:4-5).

In today's refuge Psalm verses, a serene scene is depicted where God is in full control. This peaceful picture begins with an image of a river supplying refreshing water to Jerusalem, the city of God. Because water supplies could be uncertain in ancient times, the river is said to bring gladness to the inhabitants. Many years later, Jesus would say this; "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scriptures said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water' " (Jn.7:37-38). Though destruction might rage without, we see God providing a calming presence within the city walls, as he resides in the holy place of the tabernacle in the midst of His people. To remind the people of Jerusalem and us of His unrivaled majesty, he is called the Most High... Because of His infinite wisdom, power and love, the Lord is steady, composed and imperturbable in the face of evil. So too, the city (us) that falls under His care shall not be moved. This calmness should exist because of the absolute certainty that God will aid His people. Have you ever heard the phrase that "the darkest hour is just before dawn?" The question answered in today's verses is not whether God will help, but when... God will help her at the break of dawn. I believe that our lesson here today is to not give up when things might look bleak. Salvation is never nearer than during one's most desperate hour. How reassuring it is to know that we serve the God who is in total control. "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil.4:7). God is indeed our refuge....

Have a wonderful day.... Do good and give God the credit.... Love  
Phil.4:11

mark

01/10/18

God Our Refuge... He Is Predictable

"The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Come and see the works of the Lord, the desolations he has brought on the earth. he makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; He breaks the bow and shatters the spear, He burns the shields with fire, Be still and

know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress" (Psa.46:8-11).

Today's verses invite those who doubt the determination of God to defend His covenant people, are invited to come and see the works of the Lord. The things that God has done in the past are great predictors of what He will do in the future. At the time this Psalm was written, our attention is drawn to the ability of God to thwart the evil intentions of the warlike nations that are oppressing Israel... He breaks the bow and shatters the spear, He burns the shields with fire. Here's what the psalmist is powerfully implying in these verses; The outcome of battles is not always determined by superior numbers, weapons or plans. Greater than technology or strategy are faith and righteousness. The psalmist then inserts one of the most famous verses in all of the Psalm writings, as it calls for a moment of repose and meditation; "Be still and know that I am God..." This moment of reflection and contemplation is called for because thinking clearly about one's circumstances is the surest way to alleviate despair. Here is where my title today comes into play... God's predictability... People become anxious because they do not take time to reflect properly on the Lord and His will for their lives. Stillness and knowledge walk hand in hand. Those who pause to praise God receive inner strength that empowers them to overcome the obstacles of life. "I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted on the earth." Just as the sons of Korah broke out in praise of the Lord after reflecting upon who He is, we are to do the same. An idiom we might use today is "to wake up and smell the coffee..." We must all pause in stillness to recognize who God is (be still and know that I am God) and then praise Him because The Lord Almighty is with us....

Have a great day... Make your little part of the world better.... Love  
Phil.4:11

mark

01/11/18

God Our Refuge... Personally "God is our refuge and our strength, A very present help in trouble; The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold; The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold" (Psa.46:1, 7, 11).

As we close out our devotionals from the 46th psalm, we find an aspect of our relationship with God that is really awesome... Many Bible personalities were amazed to find how near God was in their time of trouble. "A very present help in trouble." When desperate Hagar fled from her mistress Sarai, the angel of the Lord directed her to water and instructed her to return and submit to her mistress. Relieved that her life was spared, she named the cistern Beer Lahai Roi which means, "The well of the living one who sees me" (Gen 16:7-14). Since two of today's verses reference Jacob, we find that as he fled from his brother in fear of retribution, he spent the night in a Canaanite city called Luz. Using a stone for a pillow, he drifted off to sleep only to experience a peculiar night of vivid and lifelike dreams. He saw a ladder reaching from earth to

heaven with angels ascending and descending on it... God stood at the very top and addressed him with wonderful promises of protection on his journey. Surprised by God's nearness, Jacob remarked, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know" (Gen.28:11-19). Though he was far from home, he named the place Bethel meaning "house of God." When the apostle Paul preached at Mars Hill, he told of God's proximity to the His people this way; "And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on the face of the earth, having appointed their times and boundaries, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; For in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your poets have said, 'For we are His children' " (Acts 17:26-28). The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are linked together by love for the preservation of our life. Our Father is so near that He knows what we need even before we ask. Our Savior is so near! He is called "Immanuel," God with us. Our Comforter is so near that he dwells within us and makes our hearts glad. Lets all have the faith of the writer of Psalm 46 as he says that the Lord is A very present help in trouble...

Have a great day.... Let His light shine through you.... Love mark  
Phil.4:11

01/12/18  
God's Fullness

"And to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. (Eph.3:19-21).

What the apostle Paul wants Jews and Gentiles who have embraced Jesus as the Christ to know about is the fullness of God's love... He wants them to know what is the breadth and length and height and depth of that love. (3:18). In the midst of his prayer, however, he recognizes the impossibility. Whether the subject is the the love of Christ for the Father, or the love He has for mankind, it is not possible for finite minds to grasp the extent of divine love...

Paul kind of makes a "mid-course correction," as he acknowledges that the love of Christ surpasses knowledge. The prayer then takes a somewhat baffling turn, as he adds, that you may be filled up with all the fullness of God. Just what exactly does this mean? Could a mortal being hope to be filled with the fullness of God? Maybe he meant that every believer would realize the full extent of the blessings God had made possible in Christ, including forgiveness of sins, hope for eternal life and providential guidance. Likely, he is saying that the fullness of God is the fullness of His blessings. Paul's prayer here leaves no wiggle room for the distance between wish and reality. He asks God for it all, and then he said that God was able to do more than anyone could ask. In Jesus Christ, nothing is held in reserve... The Almighty God, the Creator, the Father would work His power in those who believe and obey. I keep thinking of the

hymn, "What a Mighty God We Serve." "What a mighty God we serve, What a mighty God we serve, Angels bow before Him, Heaven and earth adore Him; What a mighty God we serve."

Have a great day.... T G I F Thank God I'm Forgiven.... Love  
mark Phil.4:11

01/13/18  
Quiz.... We Are Family

1. A boy \_\_\_\_\_, his mom \_\_\_\_\_, and grandma \_\_\_\_\_ were friends of Paul
2. Two sisters \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and a brother \_\_\_\_\_ were friends of Jesus.
3. The Bible's 1st family were: father \_\_\_\_\_, mother \_\_\_\_\_ and two sons \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. A brother, \_\_\_\_\_, told about his dreams, and his brothers sold him into slavery.
5. An early Bible family were twin brothers \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, father and mother \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
6. A young boy \_\_\_\_\_ and a priest \_\_\_\_\_ lived together in the tabernacle.
7. Brothers who followed Jesus were \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and their father was \_\_\_\_\_.
8. A sister \_\_\_\_\_ watched over a baby brother \_\_\_\_\_, had another brother \_\_\_\_\_, who became famous.
9. A New Testament wilderness prophet was \_\_\_\_\_. His mom was \_\_\_\_\_ and dad was \_\_\_\_\_.
10. A prophet \_\_\_\_\_ and his harlot wife \_\_\_\_\_ lived in Old Testament times.

\* Extra Credit if you can name their three (3) kids \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

Answers; Aaron, Timothy, Hosea, Martha, Zacharias, Eunice, James, Eve, Zebedee, Esau, Aaron, Lazarus, John, Cain, Elisabeth, Gomer, Mary, Miriam, Lois, Jacob, John the Baptist, Adam, Isaac, Eli, Abel, Joseph, Moses, Eve, Rebekah, Samuel,

01/16/18

## Learning From King David's Sins

"Then Nathan said to David, 'You are that man!' Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord' " (2 Sam.11:7; 13).

David penned the words of the 51st Psalm in response to the sins he committed that we find in 2 Samuel 11. The prophet Nathan had confronted him (Vs 7) and David reacts in verse 13.

David, who the book of Hebrews describes as a man after God's own heart, must have disengaged his conscience to commit the progression of sins that he did. This detachment from correct thinking probably began when David stayed home while he sent his soldiers out to battle in 2 Sam. 11:1-2. While he was idle, it progressed to when he saw Bathsheba bathing. He then lusted after her and had sex with her. When she got pregnant, he schemed further by bringing her soldier husband home from battle so that he could hide his sins. When Uriah, the husband refused to sleep with his wife, the plot thickened and David could not blame him for the pregnancy. A plot was formed so that Uriah would be killed in battle to assuage his conscience.

Though our sins do not reach these depths, we can learn from David's sins and what he eventually did about them. Once thoughts shift from the welfare of others to satisfying personal desires, trouble is not far behind...What could possibly have been going through David's mind while his life was spiraling out of control? What happened to his ability to evaluate and regulate his ways? What we see in David's life are examples of how the "clouded thinking" people engage in after making up their minds they want to have or do something they should not... Sin is cognitively based and rooted in faulty thinking. The sinner loses touch with reality and disconnects from God's value system. That is why Jesus said this; "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind" (Lk.10:27). Lucidity and love cannot be separated, as clear thinking is a consequence of committed love, and clouded thinking a result of corrupted love. For the next few days we'll look at what to do about failure....

Have a great day.... Do good and give God the credit.... Love

mark

Phil.4:11



01/18/18

## What To Do About Failures

"Against you, and you only, have I sinned..... Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me... Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you..."  
(Psa.51: 4; 11-12; 13).

I find the importance of Psalm 51 to be its ability to teach us what to do when we have fallen short and transgressed. There are three (3) things I see here that we must be able to do. First is that reconnection to God that begins with humility. One must be prepared to acknowledge the need for God's forgiveness and His help in spiritual formation. David's awareness of his responsibility for wrongdoings (transgression, sin, iniquity, evil) led him to ask for mercy. The defiling nature of sin is recognized in the need for purification from it with words like cleanse, wash and purge. David also asked God to perform a positive work as well in the creation of a clean heart, the renewal of a steadfast spirit, and the restoration of joy known only in God's saving work. Second, we need to know the importance of asking for help. David understood his dependency on fellowship with God to effect the change he desired, as do we... The apostle Paul put it this way; "You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ" (Rom.8:9). It is the Spirit that upholds the intent of a believer's heart. Thirdly, one must have an aspiration to improve. As an incentive for action, David visualized what life would be like after God's redemptive work... It would be a life devoted to two major pursuits: evangelism and worship. The first is characterized by teaching and the latter by praising. In both, David sets the bar for us. He would proclaim God's righteous nature and ways, as must we... When freed from the agonizing guilt of sin, God would open David's lips, enabling him to declare His praise.  
Are we following his example?

Have a great day.... Let His light shine through you... Love  
Phil.4:11

mark