

Psalm 20 - Jesus is our Victory in the day of trouble

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[0:00] May the Lord answer you when you are in distress. May the name of the God of Jacob protect you. May he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion. May he remember all your sacrifices and accept your burnt offering. May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.

May we shout for joy over your victory and lift up our banners in the name of our God. May the Lord grant all your requests. Now this I know. The Lord gives victory to his anointed. He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary with the victorious power of his right hand.

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm. Lord, give victory to the king. Answer us when we call. Amen.

Praise God. Let me pray for us. Father, thank you for another day that we can come freely in your presence because of death and resurrection of your son. Ultimately, your love on display for us.

Thank you for another day that we can come freely in your presence. Thank you for another day that we can come freely in your presence and ask for mercy and grace. Father, I ask it for myself and for people as they hear. Father, help me to preach your words, communicate your word faithfully and help us to embrace the truth contained within Jesus name.

[1:51] I pray. Amen. Let me start just by sharing how my week has been in preparing for this message today. I'm not sure about you, but I don't think preaching is my main thing. Do you know what I mean?

I am not. I mean, it doesn't come that easily as it probably does to Steve. I mean, I only assume, right? So this week has been particularly difficult. I haven't preached in a good while. I wonder what that says about my preaching.

But I think I was overthinking the preaching this week and I'm overburdened by it. And in reading it, when I landed on verse 7, I was so convicted by it.

Some trust in chariots, some trust in horses, and some trust in God. Are we trusting God? And I actually found that it's so easy to skip past this verse thinking, obviously, we trust in God.

We are in church. We sing the songs, don't we? We know the Bible verses. And I thought, wow, this is probably not for me. But the reality is the biggest risk, in my opinion, in reading the text, is that we might think that we need to trust, we can trust in God plus in chariots, or that we think that it's only for people that trust, that's really the people in the world, that they trust in their own strength and then that we trust in God.

[3:12] But the actual risk is that we are going to trust in God plus something else, which really amounts to not trust in God, right? And the way it pans out in life is this, at least in my own life, that we're looking to ourselves, that we can allow, start wearing those lenses of hurt and pain and see God through those lenses.

And then we lose hope. We're praying hopeless prayers. We're actually walking in life without the joy of the Lord. And yet we might think that we trust in God. All that to say that I feel that this spoke to me.

And because I think there's more in there, I've found fitting to go in it in almost verse-by-verse fashion, which is not the most intuitive thing to follow.

But I ask for forgiveness in advance if it becomes a bit too difficult to follow. But we'll hopefully get somewhere. Let me set the scene for you.

So the people of God, the way they would worship back in the day, would be at the tabernacle, right? So they have the tabernacle of Moses. As you think about the tabernacle, the tabernacle had divisions and had a lot of rituals for you to actually access God's presence, ask for his help, for his blessing.

[4:29] So that's what the sacrifices, the actual tabernacle really pointed to Jesus who offered the final sacrifice, allowing us access to the presence of God. But what happens is the tabernacle of Moses was in place at Gideon without the Ark of the Covenant, which symbolized the presence of God.

So do you see the problem with that? They are offering sacrifices to God without the presence of God. How easy it is for us to come to church and move with emotions.

Without being aware of the presence of God, we're working from a place, a work mentality. I need to do the Christian practice. I need to offer God my service because he needs it.

But it can't be further from the truth, isn't it? And then I think about how easy it is for us to actually not be trusting in God. And the analogy, I don't have many illustrations, but I felt like if I can have any illustration, it's this.

Think about a window cleaner that is working on a high-rise building. He's dangling, tied to a rope, and he's actually trying to not die, right?

[5:41] That's one of the things that's good for him to do. And he's actually trusting in his ability and all the training that he had. But how many of you know that his safety, it boils down to this, his safety is actually more of the integrity of the rope than actually his ability to be connected to it or to perform his job well.

And in the same way, trust doesn't start with us. Trust starts without being able to see the integrity of God, right? So that's the point of it. So anyway, going back to it.

That's the scene. David, so they had known their ark. Philistines had the ark of God. God is striking the Philistines, and they decided to give the ark back.

David sees the ark and brings it to Jerusalem. The tabernacle of Moses is still in Gideon. He sets up a tent, a new tabernacle there. What's going on that's different at this time? David invites, hires out musicians and singers to what is believed to be a 24-hour, 24-7 prayer service and worship service around the camp, if you like.

So this is the scene. David went there to offer sacrifices, and the worship's in the background, my voice is going. So David goes there to offer sacrifices, a symbol saying, we need you, God.

[7:04] It's for good fortune in the battle. He's actually offering sacrifices to ask God's presence to go with him. This is really the assurance that it would give him victory, right?

So the whole community is, like, lifting up their voices while he's there. He's coming out. The people are actually praying for him. Music is probably in the background. They are praying for him. This is what you hear from verse 1 to 4 is the people's prayer for the king.

But something about it, because the prayer is really not one that comes out of a standpoint of hope. They actually seem to be confident of success, because they are actually declaring that they trust in the name of the Lord, probably reminding themselves about how faithful God is.

Because the name has everything to do with how much you can trust God. The name of God reveals his will, his character, and his intentions. So they are actually saying that we trust in who God is, and because he's good, and because he's powerful, then we're going to have victory.

This story, obviously, points us forward to Jesus, the greater king, through whom we learn to pray not just for victory, but from victory. I've put this in various points, so just follow with me.

[8:24] Verse 1 and 2, God is a shield in the fortress. It's our shield in our fortress. I learned from studying. I'm not linguistic. That this verse has been written in English, translated in English.

May is in an optative mood. Meaning, it's something you desire, but you're not sure that's going to happen. And that's not the best translation, apparently. Rabbi said that the right translation would read like this.

The next slide is going to say is, The Lord will answer you in the day of trouble. He will send you help from the sanctuary. As you see, this is not vague hope. It's a covenant confidence.

They are reminding themselves of God of Jacob. Probably thinking about the events just gone. They've been released by God, freed from Egypt.

They've been guided by God. They've crossed the sea in safety. As we know, it's our Passover, isn't it? Pointing to Jesus again. The word help in there is really defense.

[9:30] And the answer there has to do with defense. And the word help in the passage has to do with being lifted up out of the reach of your enemy. Look at what Psalms 18, 48 says.

He, God, lifts me up above my enemies. So the question I had to myself, this is a question to myself, after reading this, is, Lewis, where do you instinctively put your trust or turn to when trouble comes?

When things feel uncertain, what is your first impulse? Is to cry out to God or to try and carry it yourself? Second point, God moves according to his heart.

The verse says, three and four will say, He will remember all your sacrifices and accept your burnt offerings. It's the part A there, verse three. The sacrifices and burnt offerings point us, point them to the holiness of God and the cost of accessing his presence.

Just think about it. Guess what? Sacrifice, a sacrifice for accessing God's presence was required then and is required now. The only difference is when we put our trust in Jesus, we benefit from what Jesus accomplished on the cross.

[10:45] The perfect sacrifice was offered. Therefore, we now have access to God's presence. Hebrews 9, 12. He will give you the desire of your hearts and make all your plans succeed.

This may sound like a promise for personal fulfillment. But as you know, I don't think that that's the case. There would be the wrong interpretation of it. The heart in here means the inner will.

And really what's inferring is the inner will that's aligned with God. The word plans means the counsel. It's either the counsel of God or our counsel.

But the right translation, the best translation as it aligns with other verses of the Bible, would be something like this. This is my translation though. God works out his purposes when our hearts are prepared to want what he wants.

That's more like it, isn't it? So the question I ask myself is, Lewis, what are you praying for right now? Is it something that God would delight to give you?

[11:50] Are you asking him to bless your plans or to shape your heart? Third point. We shout from victory.

Verse 5. We will shout for joy over your victory and lift up our banners in the name of God. You see, they are planning to celebrate even before the fight.

Isn't that amazing? If life would pan out just like that for us. Basically, that's what the Lord is teaching us. That's actually the Psalms being captured and written for us to sing.

So they're singing this as their truth, as what they experience. We will experience because they believe in God. To raise a banner meant declaring allegiance to God.

They're actually saying, we belong to you. Our victory is actually your victory. So the question I ask myself is, Lewis, are you waiting to praise God once you are victorious?

[12:53] Once you have what you want? Or once you have the answer that you've been asking? What would it look like to raise a banner right now before I have those answers?

A fourth point. Apologies if I'm going too quick. I'm pressure for that thing people have against Brazilians because we talk too much.

Salvation comes through the anointed. The verse says, Now this I know the Lord gives victory to his anointed. He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary with the victorious power of his right hand.

This seems to be a turning point there. Because now the king is praying. He might be talking to himself. But as I mentioned in the kids Bible slot, There is inevitably this link between his life and Jesus' life.

Right? In many ways, Jesus prayed in the garden and God answered. Didn't he? But it's inevitably the best assumption to think that.

[14:09] David himself offered sacrifices. Came out. The people are praying for him. And because they say the words, they mention the name of God. That their trust is in God. They actually, He is reminded and stirred up.

And he declares, Now I know. It's really a settled conviction, isn't it? Because of who God is, it's easy to infer that he is going to be faithful and he's going to fulfill his promise.

God had promised David to give him victory. It's really important to bear in mind that they say they will have victory in God's name.

So they knew there was nothing about them that was going to give him victory other than they carried, they trusted the name of the Lord. This really points us to Jesus.

The true anointed one was raised in victory in seats at the right hand of the Father, which symbolized authority, isn't it? So the question I ask myself is, Lewis, are you living through Christ's victory?

[15:11] Are you living as if it's already yours or you're still trying to win the battle he's already won? Verse 7 and 8 talks about it's the most used verse, angle from which people preach.

Self-reliance or God dependence. Some trust in chariots, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright.

They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm. I explained this in my brief introduction. Charity and horses would probably mean a lot of different things here.

They probably mean, could mean money, credentials, influence, all the things that are not necessarily bad, are they? It's the positioning we put them in.

When we trust in God, he will give us favor, and that's the thing. Where we cannot trust that we need favor to win, we have the victory in God.

[16:16] And whatever we go through, it's not about winning or losing, it's about the presence that we care. Remember the Psalms that would say, even though we'll walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I'm not sure if you get the picture, but it doesn't look like victory, right?

If, if, I mean, I've just been to Greece. I'm not sure if you've been to Greece. We have a Greek man in here. I can tell you. I mean, I've been, we've been to 16 islands so far.

We don't go anywhere else. It feels great, right? And in a way, we can think that that's heaven. I mean, just, in some of the sceneries, you can say, wow, God is probably replicating heaven in here. And that's the victorious life that some preach. But how many of you know that sometimes we're going to go through the valley of shadow of death? That's life on earth, isn't it? But it's not about that.

It's not about turning life around so he becomes Greece. It's about who is with you, who is with me. And that's what changes it.

[17:19] We cannot glorify God without fully trusting in him to the exclusion of everything and everyone else. So a question that I ask myself, is there something of someone you've been relying on more than God?

Is it your ability, Lewis? Probably not. Certainly not. Your network, your knowledge. It might be that you don't think you trust on these things, but the fact that these things, the lack of these things, affect your life to the point you're hopeless means you're actually putting your trust on these things. I might finish myself in 20 minutes. And this is the real question I ask myself in this point, was what would it look like for me to lay down everything that you put your trust in loose and choose to trust God instead?

As I mentioned, I had a rough week. One is self-imposed pressure to perform. Self-imposed pressure, that's to do with sin in my life and in my flesh.

Because I grew up in a broken home. So my dad was absent. This inevitably affected me to the point where I started to think I needed to please people so they wouldn't leave.

[18:51] And I can see worth in my life because after all, my dad laughed. There must be a reason, something I've done wrong. And that framed how I saw God, especially when people would tell me God is like a father to you.

Oh, I guess when it's about time, he's going to leave because I am so ugly. My life, there's nothing that I can offer. And that is true. Some of that is true, isn't it?

It's like there's nothing we can offer. Sometimes, I think about this thing that we actually need is God's presence and his peace. Because Jesus warned us, life in this world will be hard.

When I read that verse that talks about the peace of God, for example, that the peace of God will go beyond your understanding, the way I really learned it in my heart from experience with God is this.

When you find God, you realize that he's been looking for you. And once he finds you and you surrender, you'll be overwhelmed by a peace that will mean that you don't anymore need answers to the very many traumas you had in your life and the questions that you carry.

[20:07] Because the superseding glory of knowing God is so much greater. So finally, verse 9 is going to talk about the final confidence and it says, O Lord, save the king.

May he answer us when we call. So the psalm is really ending where he began. Began with the prayers, isn't it? But remember, this is a prayer laced with confidence.

And for us Christians today, we know that the king has already been saved from death and now reigns. So that's why we don't pray for victory.

We pray from his victory. victory. There's a way for us to think about another story as you remember Peter because I'm going to share with you that there's probably two possible translations for this passage.

But we're going to get there and if you think about Peter, he's stepping out of the boat, faith in Jesus. He's rocking it. He's the super Christian. He's going towards Jesus.

[21:15] How many times do you feel like that, right? It feels like everything is working out and eventually he starts drowning. Well, I can relate to that more than what you would think.

And what does he do? Does he start swimming? Does he start, well, the Bible is going to teach us that he cries out to God. And what does Jesus do?

Punishes him? Oh, look at you. Bad swimmer. You should know by now how to swim. No, Jesus comes to the rescue. God is pleased to rescue us.

So it would be a good thing to sing this new song to God where our lives change to the point that where we know that whatever happens we can always call on the Lord. Isn't it?

That would be amazing. That's the Christian life. There's never a promise that everything would be perfect but rather that he would be with us, he would help us. And how do I know that? It's because of his name.

[22:17] His name is his covenant with us. Anyway, my closing points are this. There's two things that I think this passage is teaching us that must shape our prayers and one thing that we need to pray for.

The first one is this. Pray in his name. It says in verse 1, In the name of God, of Jacob, we'll protect you. We'll set up banners in the name of our God.

It's really important for us to understand Jesus. Jesus came and told us because we were not praying things in his name so therefore pray in my name. Like I said, God's names tell us about who he is.

Tells us what he wants to do. Reveals his heart and his will. Many people think that God's will is really mysterious. Therefore, they're living through life, coasting.

Whatever happens, oh, good thing happened, God. Bad thing happened, oh, this is the enemy or this, that's not how it works. We can see and know the will of God revealed in Jesus.

[23:24] There's nothing we're going to know more that we need to know more for salvation, for us to be saved. Everything has been told. God is not hiding anything from you.

Everything is in the Bible. His word, his will has been fully expressed. There's certainly things, answers we're going to have in heaven. Whoa, where are the dinosaurs?

Why did they exist? I don't even know if we're going to have those answers but that's not the point. We're praying in his name because his will, this is what they did, isn't it? They were going, not in their own strength, in the name of God.

In the name of God, for example, how we ought to shape our prayers. God, one of the names of God is Jehovah Rapha, for example, which means the God who heals.

Guess what Jesus did? How many of you know that Jesus only did the will of the Father? A few people. Great. You know, right? Jesus talking about himself quoting a prophecy over him.

[24:21] Jesus went about doing good, healing all. Why did he heal? Because that's the will of the Father. Whether things are going to be completely healed now or in heaven, they are going to be fulfilled in heaven when we get there because the Bible says that day, he will wipe every tear from our eyes.

There will be no more pain or suffering, no more death. So that's the idea. We ought to pray in his name but there's a way we can religiously pray and say in Jesus' name. That's not what's saying. Second point is pray from his victory. That's really striking in there. And they say this, now I know the Lord gives victory to his anointed.

There's a way for us to think that he is, David is prophetically speaking about Jesus who was to come, the final, the king of kings in the final victory on offer for us to enjoy.

But again, the reality is Christians shouldn't pray hoping for victory. We pray from resurrection ground because we know that the victory is ours because that's the thing.

[25:32] David would go out as a king win his battles and when he would come back he would go back to his palace, right? In a way, yes, people's lives were spared, they joined in the victory but they would go back to their lives.

But the king of kings is different. He came and I say this and this was researching something else but anyway, just think about what a Christian life it really is.

This is not about winning those battles only because Jesus did it differently. The world will tell us that winning life is about this is the strongest and the fittest and the wisest will prevail but the gospel really is that the strongest lays down his life so that the weakest can live but that's not all.

Jesus gave the crown that was his the crown of righteousness. He clothed us with the crown of righteousness. So he came back and shared the spoil of his victory with us and not only that he went to heaven to prepare for us a place.

So basically in other words we would live with him. They couldn't live with David back in the day.

The final thing the final point pray for his return. The Lord saves the king he will answer us when we call.

[26:51] There's two interpretations for this verse here two possible interpretations for this verse but it's definitely a cry not a desperate one it's a confident one because the king who's saved is coming again he will answer when his people call.

Maybe you are here and you're not a Christian. This is a verse for you. If you call on the name of the Lord he's faithful willing ready to save you.

But the more accurate translation of this passage if you look at the Hebrew don't I'm not trying to be fancy here I don't know Hebrew and Seth and the theologians in the room Seth, Steve they shake when someone says in the Hebrew but actually I just read in my Bible there's the interlinear translation in there only says the word he answer call.

It's a rude way of saying something isn't it? But the word call in there is be summoned that's what it means and it seems as though it perfectly is another possibility for the translation of this verse whatever it is we can call on the name of the Lord for him to come back right?

We are praying for his return or this is what I think the verse is saying 1 Thessalonians 4 16 and 18 for the Lord himself will come down from heaven this is the second coming of Christ with a loud command with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God whether he's coming back because God is sounding the trumpet or because we're calling out whatever this is it seems that we need to keep on calling the Lord the word says Maranatha come Lord Jesus okay I'm done with the message how this relates to us well in many ways you're probably here you heard the message and you feel like well I trust God great message or not so great message but I trust God but I want to offer you a possibility that if you fit into any of these scenarios here I'm going to describe it's possible that you're trusting God plus something else which amounts not trusting God altogether so maybe you've lost a loved one and that's painful and it's hard and because of that you've allowed bitterness towards God to quietly move in where hope used to live maybe it's your marriage that is cold or completely broken and the hurt actually consumes your thoughts to the point

[29:29] God is not a priority anymore perhaps you're facing a diagnosis and you're in chronic pain and joy has slipped through your fingers or maybe it's quieter than that you carry a dull disappointment in life a sense that things have not just turned out the way you hoped and now God seems far away well I said probably far too many times in this message Jesus warned us life in this world would be difficult hard ugly and often unfair issue is it doesn't seem to be getting any easier does it but I want to encourage you with this from reading the text and learning more about who God is I want to tell you this there is nothing you and I can go through we'll ever go through that Jesus doesn't understand

I'm encouraged to think that he not only is willing to help us but he feels our pain so the question I leave you with would you call out to him in faith today would you sing to him a new song of praise before you have the answer to the problems that are consuming your life it's not the song we're going to sing at the end but it would line up really well Psalm 43 this is what the Lord is promising to do to us to put a new song in our mouth a hymn of praise to our God so that many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him finally up until here talking to mainly Christians if you're not Christian you are in the room I have two sets of news for you the bad news is this if you haven't yet put your trust in him you have to fight the battle of life by yourself and for yourself let me tell you this you're not going to win the good news is this he loves you he loves you and is inviting you to his salvation the king of kings conquered death so you wouldn't have to fight yourself if that's you you can come and talk to us at the end we'd love to walk with you through the bible to tell you more about the grace of God manifest in the life of Jesus who died on the cross for us to save us he's coming soon and we're going to be with him if that's not victory

I don't know what is let me pray for us father I want to thank you for your love and grace father thank you for Jesus sacrifice which meant we can now come boldly to your presence to your very throne and find grace and mercy father help us to know you more so that trust will come from a place of intimacy help us to move from self reliance to God dependence so we can be of use until the day Jesus comes to rescue us from this ugly world that we live in right now this is what I pray in Jesus name Amen Amen