

## **1Tim 24-05-19b**

Thank you Dan and Anna and Lori. Love to hear that pump organ. I think I told you I'm in the midst of restoring one.

You can't get that at your local Five and Dime. And we're blessed by the sentiment. I love those words.

What more can he say than to you he has said to you who to Jesus for refuge have fled. Let's pick up our study now. We are looking at the deliverance that God reserves for the saints and faithful.

And in that regard, we have an abundance of biblical witness. You can look, for example, at David and Goliath, the archetypal deliverance story in the Old Testament from 1st Samuel chapter 17. And David says in 1st Samuel 17:37, the Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.

Talking to King Saul. Past remembrance of God's faithfulness and God's deliverance and learning to practice faith in the midst of difficulty and seemingly insurmountable challenge. David says God has done it before and he will do it again.

Coming against a lion and a bear are not uncommon in the life of a shepherd who is out in the wilderness with victuals for predators as a flock. And in the ordinary course of David's service as a shepherd, he learned to practice faith. Fending off predatory attacks on the flock was a part of his daily life.

Now he faces something very different and very unusual, but he says the same God that has been delivering me in these normal trials will deliver me in this extraordinary trial. He's the same God. He's got unlimited power.

And it's a wonderful pattern to recognize that our small victories of remembering who we are and why we're here, remembering to rely on God, remembering to work through daily difficulties by faith, strengthens us and prepares us for larger challenges as are upcoming in our life and circumstance in this country and via technology. You can go to a similar passage in second Kings chapter 20. This is Hezekiah who is sick unto death, but God sends Isaiah with healing and with a message of deliverance.

And in second Kings chapter 20, verse six, the message from God is assure Hezekiah, he's not going to die. I will add 15 years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the King of Assyria.

This is the Assyria that has rolled up nation after nation after nation. I will defend this city for two reasons. God doesn't say Hezekiah, you're such a wonderful example of faith and patience.

You have earned deliverance from my hand. He says, I will defend this city for my own sake and for my servant David's sake. Hezekiah is a son of David and God says for his own glory, for his own name's sake, he is going to defend the city and for my servant David's sake.

If God will defend Jerusalem from the Assyrians for David's sake, how much more will he defend us both individually and collectively for David's greater son's sake? We are uniquely related to God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ. We have been redeemed not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, sanctified, sprinkled, identified, and cleansed through and by that blood. God will watch over us.

He will protect us. He will deliver us. There is blessing by association around us.

How wide that circle is is up to God, but I want to be someone that God can bless, that God can protect, and that God can extend a periphery of blessing around. The best way I can help others sometimes is to simply be someone that God can bless and that blessing by association can extend. We are delivered from the hand of the wicked specifically.

Turn with me to Psalm 7. Psalm 7. This is a meditation of David which he sang to the Lord concerning the words of Cush of Benjamite. O Lord my God, in you I put my trust. Save me from all those who persecute me and deliver me, lest they tear me like a lion, rending me in pieces, while there is none to deliver.

This is the David who has already defeated a lion and a bear and Goliath, but he says there are those who are after me. They're trying to take me down. They're trying to tear me apart.

So notice what David prays. O Lord my God, I am putting my trust in you. Not in my abilities, not in my slingshot, not in my wrestling and lion and bear quelling experience.

I put my trust in you. Save me from all those who are coming after me, oppressing, persecuting me. Verse 3. O Lord my God, if I have done this, if there is iniquity in my hands, if I have repaid evil to him who was at peace with me, if I have plundered my enemy without a cause, then let the enemy pursue me and overtake me.

Let him trample my life to the earth and lay my honor in the dust. What is David saying here? I am guiltless of behavior that would make this judgment fair. What he's basically saying is there is not iniquity in my hands.

I have not repaid evil to him who was at peace with me. I've not plundered my enemy without a cause. If I have, if I have not brought these sins up, if I have not done, as David writes in Psalm 51, the confession, the relying on God's grace and forgiveness, then let them come after me.

Verse 6. Arise, O Lord, in your anger. Lift yourself up because of the rage of my enemies.

Rise up to the judgment you have commanded so that the congregation of the peoples shall surround you.

For their sakes, return on high. The Lord shall judge the peoples. Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness.

There's a powerful prayer. Judge me according to my righteousness. I am not perpetrating pattern sins.

When David sins, he prays, purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. I can now stand on my righteousness, which comes from God.

And I can judge me according to my righteousness, which isn't my righteousness. When we pray this prayer, where does our righteousness come from? It is the Lord Jesus. We are invested with his righteousness.

We lay hold of God's righteousness by faith. It's not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy that he saves us and cleanses us and sanctifies us. And it is on his righteousness that we can stake our claim and ask for judgment.

Verse nine, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish the just. For the righteous, God tests the hearts and minds. God evaluates us.

Are we qualified for deliverance? Are we qualified to be blessed and be a blessing? Because we have eliminated sin, both through confession and cleansing from God and by abandoning patterns and practices that lead to sin. My defense is from God who saves the upright heart. An upright heart will go to God for righteousness, for cleansing, for the fulfilling of promises that we claim.

God is a just judge in verse 11. God is angry with the wicked every day. If he does not turn back, he will sharpen his sword.

He bends his bow and makes it ready. He prepares for himself instruments of death. He makes his arrows into fiery shafts.

What is the essence of this? Leave opposition, leave the demolition of enemies to God. You want to try your arrows or do you want to let God use his? You want to try to take up arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them in your own strength, or do you want to let God as a just and righteous judge do so with his bow and his instruments of death? Verse 14, the wicked brings forth iniquity. He conceives trouble and brings forth falsehood.

He makes a pit and digs it out and has fallen into the ditch which he has made. Those who try to attack and neutralize and thwart believers in living a life of faith and obedience are going to be hoist on their own petard. They're going to fall into the ditch

that they have dug for us.

We will not fall into the ditch because God protects us. God warns us. God prepares us.

God guides us and he does not suffer us to be waylaid by the wicked. The wicked's trouble shall return upon his own head. His violent dealing shall come down on his own crown.

I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high. We don't have to trust in man or make flesh our strength. We don't let our heart depart from the Lord.

We're not going to be a shrub in the desert that doesn't see good when it comes. Psalm 17, 13, we can pray a prayer against those who would deceive us, who would try to persuade us and lead us astray. David prays in Psalm 17, 13, arise, O Lord, confront him and subdue him.

Deliver my soul from the wicked by your sword. Psalm 18, 16 through 19. David says he sent from on high.

He took me. He drew me out of many waters. He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me for they were too mighty for me.

They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the Lord was my support. He brought me out into a broad place. He rescued me because he delighted in me.

We ensure that we are qualified for deliverance, that we can come boldly before the throne and request it. Psalm 59, 2 is another prayer for deliverance from those who work evil and those who are blood thirsty. We are preserved from famine.

Psalm 33, 19 he delivers the righteous soul from death and keeps them alive in famine, in a time of scarcity, a time of necessity. Psalm 22 verses 19 through 21. You, O Lord, do not be far off.

O you, my help, come quickly to my aid. Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog. Save me from the mouth of the lion.

You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen. Violence, mean spirited attack. We can confidently request deliverance from God.

Even when it seems life threatening. Psalm 56, 13, you have delivered my soul from death. You have kept my feet from falling.

Why? So that I may walk before God in the light of life. There is a purpose in our deliverance. It isn't just removing our fear and removing our conflicts and the attacks of those who would cause us to stumble and fall, who would deceive us, who would deflect

us.

There is a purpose. We can remind God that when we are delivered, when by grace he keeps us from tripping and falling, we can walk before him in the light of life. We serve as a witness and a testimony.

We represent the Lord Jesus Christ. And to do that, we can't be defeated and crushed by opposition. Psalm 86, verse 13.

Again in prayer, great is your steadfast love toward me. You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol. Hosea 13, 14, God says, I shall ransom them from the power of Sheol.

I shall redeem them from death. O death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your sting? You remember that quote in the New Testament by Paul. God is the deliverer.

He represents himself as such time and time again in the Old Testament, identifying himself as the God who brought Israel out of the land of Egypt. His name is Deliverer. His name is Savior.

And we can claim this. You remember in Galatians 1.4, I've quoted it many times. The Lord Jesus gave himself for our sins.

This is the precious blood of Christ. He gave himself for our sins. Why? To deliver us out from the present evil age.

According to the will of our God and father. It's God's will that we not succumb, that we not be deceived or deflected. Take it to the bank.

These are concepts and promises and principles that we bring into our prayers when we request the wisdom that James says we should ask for. Colossians 1.13, he has delivered us from the domain of darkness, the rule, the kingdom of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the son of his love, his beloved son. We are delivered in the present and we are delivered from the wrath to come.

And that, of course, is 1 Thessalonians 1.10. We are looking for and waiting on the Lord Jesus. When we pray to the father, we wait for his son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come. It's a promise.

We are delivered in trials. This is 2 Peter 2.9. The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and how to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment. We've seen that throughout those passages in the Psalms.

God is aware. God knows who belongs to him, who is under attack, who is facing trial and conflict. He knows how to rescue the godly.

Notice, rescue the godly. I don't have to rescue myself. I've got to concentrate on being someone rescuable.

Concentrate on godliness, the mystery of godliness. Paul talks about in our passage in 1 Timothy. We, in 1 Corinthians 10.13, no testing, no temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.

God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the he will also provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it. Sometimes we are delivered out from, sometimes we are delivered through, but it is always the power of God.

It is always the grace of God, and it is always the glory of God that is ultimately revealed and reflected in those tests. So, as we return to our James chapter 1 context, look at verse 12. James 1.12. Blessed is the man who endures testing, who endures temptation.

When he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love him. Instead of concentrating subjectively on people, on things, on the power of the enemy to attack us, to deceive us, to send the world hurtling in a downward spiral, we concentrate on loving God, trusting God, turning to God in times of trial. It is a great thing to say, it is a wonderful concept, but practical steps to loving God and reflecting His glory are to ensure that we have a pure heart.

1 Timothy 1.5. The goal of our instruction is love. So, if you feel attacked, if you are oppressed, if you are working through a lot of hardship and friction, you say, I need to do something about this friction, I need to do something about this relationship, something about this problem, something about this avenue of attack on my peace and my soul. Forget the attack, forget the people, forget the technology.

You can ultimately wind up being subjective if we don't focus on the solution. The solution is three things. If you find that we are starting to have to work to maintain the fruit of the Spirit, stop working and go back to the big three.

First of all, is my heart pure? Have I confessed any mental attitude sins or sins of the tongue or overt sins? Have I ensured that my heart is pure and that I am motivated by love for God and a desire to live in a way that pleases Him? All the Old Testament commands can be summed up in, first of all, loving the Lord our God fully, completely. Am I doing that? Let me start there. Forget the noise, forget the friction and the deflection, the smoke, the problems.

What's the status of my heart? Have I let these things get to me in a sinful way? Let me dig out those sins, identify them, acknowledge them, and get them cleansed and abandon the future perpetration of those sins. I'm not going to let myself get angry, depressed, frustrated, bilious, frustrated. I'm going to rest in the provision of my

Heavenly Father.

I need a pure heart. I need a good conscience. Am I reviewing what I know with respect to neighbor love, one another love, love for those who are outside? Am I endeavoring as much as it is up to me to live peaceably? Am I avoiding creating occasions for conflict, disturbing the peace? Can I work quietly, mind my own business, work with my hands, and not be the cause, not be the source or the continuer of conflict and friction? I do my part to live peaceably with everyone.

Good conscience and genuine faith. Am I asking God for wisdom and then going to where I know I can find it? There's a lot of wonderful presentation of the Word of God. Many, many good teachers, good sources, good perspectives to which we can resort like an oasis of living water to refresh and restore our souls by the still waters.

So how do we face the challenges? How do we face the violence and the distortions and the perversions and the corruptions and the noise and the evil that just seems to be like a tornado in our culture and in our news and over our media and around the world? I concentrate on qualifying myself for God's deliverance. I am going to look and make sure I've got a pure heart. I'm going to look and make sure I've got a good conscience.

I'm going to look and make sure that I am cultivating and perpetrating an unhypocritical faith, genuine faith, faith grounded in the Word of God that I think about, I read it, I bring it to my mind. I might be driving, I might be doing a repetitious task. There's lots of things I can think about.

I can turn on the news and stew about world events or national events or politics or whatever's streaming across whatever device I've got, or I can shut that stuff off from time to time. Nothing wrong with being aware, nothing wrong with following. If you're going to be as wise as a serpent, you've got to know how serpents act and what they're doing.

But as the need arises, shut that off. Jesus said, go into your private space, go into your closet, and spend some quality time. If I find myself getting alarmed, getting frustrated, getting angry, wanting to go tilt at some windmill, find a quiet space, even if it is just the quiet closet of my own soul.

And what was the theme and the thrust of the passage we covered in our most recent Bible class, or maybe the one before that? What did I cover this morning in my Bible reading or my daily devotional or my last conversation with a fellow believer who loves God and loves His Word? Some promise, principle, doctrine, concept, observation of the truth, and let the Holy Spirit enable and empower me to bear the fruit of the Spirit by reflecting on that truth. One ounce of God's truth can neutralize tons of the world's fertilizer, Satan's doctrines. God's Word is alive and powerful.

Resort to it. Get it cycling in our thinking. It's a disinfectant.

It is an antibiotic. It is an antiviral. Whatever diseased material the world throws at us, God's Word can stabilize us, can prevent us from being overturned and deflected and tripped up.

It's simple. Don't try to find a solution to the world's problems or even our personal problems in a direct sense. That's a distraction.

That's reaching out. If I just pick this fruit and take a bite, I'll be in a better place. Pure heart, good conscience, genuine faith, faith grounded in the unassailable, uncontroversially understood Word of God, the promises, the principles, the doctrines.

If we do those three things, we will not be moved, and we can enter boldly into God's throne room and ask and seek and knock. You're never going to get a scorpion or a snake or a stone by way of answer. God loves us.

He's our Heavenly Father. We are qualified in Christ. And when we do what we're supposed to and avail ourselves of the existing grace of His Word and His Spirit, the fresh insight, the fresh wisdom that we need.

When we fall into various trials, we first of all recognize that we have been left here specifically to face those trials. Those kinds of trials aren't going to exist in all of the future ages to come. It is now that God can work things together for good to those who love Him, to those who recognize the calling and the opportunity.

So we can be expectant. We can be confident. We can be joyful when we're facing these challenges that would daunt anybody trying to use human strength and human solutions.

They can be depressed. They can be discouraged. They can fall down.

Not us. My brethren, count it all joy. Knowing the testing of your faith produces the kind of endurance that God is going to use now and in the future.

Let patience have its perfect work to make us perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If we lack wisdom, ask of God, gives liberally and without reproach, and it will be given. Ask and it shall be given.

So now, if we are having trouble, what's the problem? If I think I still don't have wisdom, I need to go back through my solid steps. Maybe I've missed something and I don't have a pure heart. Maybe I've missed something and I haven't ensured that I've got a sanctified conscience.

I haven't been producing the effort that Paul talks about to maintain a good conscience. Maybe I haven't spent enough time reflecting on the truth of the Word of God. Because if

I do those three things, I am qualified and God will respond with the wisdom and the strength and the patience that I need to live a life that pleases Him, to reflect His glory, to represent the Lord Jesus Christ, and to have the opportunity not to worry about myself, but to be a blessing, to be a lamp on a lampstand, to shine a light that benefits others, to be someone who can express love that is sacrificial to self and beneficial to others, and do it confidently in God's power, by God's grace, in God's strength, to the glory of the Lord Jesus and to the glory of the Father.

This is our great privilege. There are not very many believers who understand these things well enough to do them. We do understand.

We see it clearly in God's Word. All we have to do now is make it happen. And that is our calling, that is our challenge, and that's our message of encouragement for the morning.

We'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You that You have left us here to face challenges and trials. You have equipped us with the full armor so that in the day of challenge we can stand uninjured, unharmed, with the shield of faith, with the sword of the Spirit, which is Your Word.

We pray that as a result of reviewing these truths, God the Holy Spirit can bring them to our minds in a helpful way that results in wisdom and exploiting the opportunities to develop the patience that comes from the testing of our faith. We pray that in all things the Lord Jesus will be glorified. We ask it in His name.

Amen.