

Psalms 18-12-27

Good evening, welcome to the Thursday night Bible class at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It is December the 27th, 2018 and we continue our study in the book of Psalms. We're going to be looking at the last verse or two of Psalm 19 and then moving to Psalm 22.

We'll take a moment as we usually do to ask God's blessing on our study and give ourselves the opportunity to cultivate the presence and power of God's Holy Spirit, so that as we look at this portion of God's Word, it will have its maximum effect. Shall we pray? Father, we pray with the psalmist that the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts will be acceptable in your sight. You are our strength, our rock, and our redeemer, and we're so grateful for the opportunity we have to nourish our souls and refresh our hearts at the oasis of your Word.

We pray that as we look at these portions of it together, that your Holy Spirit will be our teacher and will minister to each one of us in a way that is meaningful, motivating, encouraging, and illuminating as we face the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

As we try to concentrate beyond the little canine friends here, if you'll take a look one last time at Psalm 19, there is a final thought that we did not have time to complete last time, and that is having to do with what in your English translation says are secret faults and presumptuous sins. So, picking up here in verse 12, who can understand his errors, cleanse me from secret faults, keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression.

Okay, I consider all of you to be highly intelligent, qualified, steeped in the word, theologians. So, I have a theological question for you, and it is this. David says here, cleanse me from secret faults.

That is understandable. We are promised in 1 John that if we confess our sins, the ones that we know about, if we homo logeo, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, those sins that have been named, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. So, there could be unrighteousness that we are not even aware of or have not specifically named, and yet we are cleansed, right? Now, what about this next phrase? He says, keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins.

What is a presumptuous sin? If you look at the notion that is often suggested here, you will find them referring to Numbers 15:30, which talks about the sin of the high hand, literally. Sort of a rebellious, in-your-face sort of a sin. So, here's my question.

Is this a legitimate thing to pray? Keep back your servant from a willful sin. I have free will, at least if you're not a dyed-in-the-wool, hardcore five-point Calvinist, you believe you have free will, right? So, is this a prayer to have God overrule our free will? I'm going to want to do a bad thing, but Lord, keep me back, hold me back from willful sin. And is this a prayer that God

would answer? If I decide I want to willfully sin, is it legitimate to say, hold me back from a willful sin, O Lord? That way I'll be blameless.

What is, in your estimation, the normal mechanism for keeping us from sinning? There's another psalm that pertains. You remember Psalm 119.11? Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that what? Say it out loud. That I might not sin against thee.

Thy word I have voluntarily stored away in my heart so that I won't sin against you, right? Well, without belaboring the point, I've got a problem with this translation, not only because it doesn't reflect what's actually in the Hebrew, but because, in my understanding, it's theologically untenable. I don't think you can ask God to hold you back from doing what you want to do, to disable your free will. There are other provisions that God has made where we equip ourselves.

Psalm 119.105, thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. I choose my path based on the word of God shining on it. Light has come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.

This seems to me to be unique in Scripture, where you have someone praying, keep me back from a willful sin. Hold me back, hold me back. I'm trying to do a willful sin, but oh Lord, just stop me, bind me.

It reminds me of people praying, you know, bind Satan. It's not a legitimate prayer. You cannot ask God to bind Satan.

God's got a time and a place where he's going to bind Satan, and it isn't here, and it's not now, and it's a waste of time praying. So, I just offer you that by way of piquing your curiosity, because when we look behind the English translation here, we find that it does not say, keep your servant back from presumptuous sins. You will notice in your New King James there, that sins is in italics.

So, without that, and we've got perfectly good sin. He could say sin of the high hand. He could use the very same phrase that's found over in Numbers 1530.

A sin of the high hand is well documented. This instead says something different, and it is first of all preceded by cleanse me from secret faults, and of course faults is also in italics. So, we don't have any of the Hebrew words for sin here.

We've got a number of different descriptive terms, both in Hebrew and Greek, for missing the mark, falling short, transgressing, defiling oneself, perpetrating evil, committing sin, of all different kinds. Transgressions, there's lots of different words. None of them are here, and this makes me a little bit curious, because if this is what David is actually talking about, there ought to be at least one word somewhere in here for sin.

What did he just get through saying in verse 11? Talking about the judgments and the statutes

and the commandments and the testimonies of God. They are more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter than honey in the honeycomb. Moreover, by them, what happens? Your servant is warned.

If you start thinking down the road of doing a presumptuous sin or committing a secret fault, what does the Word of God do for us? It warns us. We've got a warning system. This is like, oh Lord, if I slam on my brakes and the ABS warning light comes on, stop me beyond what's already been provided.

They've got cars now that have cameras, and if a pedestrian walks in front of you, the car will slam on the brakes to try to keep you from being responsible for mowing someone down or hitting an object or the bumper of the car in front of you, which is the most common. But as we saw last time in verse 12, even the word errors is not really as clear as your English may want you to think. There is warning from the Word of God, and there is great reward in listening to it, heeding its illuminating light, and following it.

But the word translated errors here is uh saga, it's uh shagia actually, and it only occurs here. So if David is asking to to be protected from his own errors, why would he use such an obscure word? We have to go to the root of this, which is the the verb shagah. Shagia is the is a feminine noun, which feminine nouns are typically abstractions.

They're often abstractions in Hebrew, but shagah means to to stray. This is what I was trying to talk about last time, and I got I got a little bit mixed there toward the end. But shagah means to go to to stray.

So what is he really asking when he says who can who can perceive when he's going astray? Have you ever taken a wrong turn or missed your exit? I was going somewhere I've been a lot of times, which is the Tulsa airport to pick up some family for the holidays, and I was thinking about something else, talking with one of my favorite people, and I just how many times have I been to the Tulsa airport in my life? Dozens and dozens and dozens, and I blew right by the exit like it wasn't even there. Who can see when you go astray? You don't go astray if you're paying attention, but if your attention is diverted, if you're busy looking elsewhere, who can avoid going astray? This is really the question. So it's it is easy to be distracted and to to stray to step off the path when we're not watching.

So David says, who can who cannot do that? Has anybody ever never missed an exit, never forgot something, never walked off and left their Bible on top of the car or their coffee cup on the bumper or never got distracted and locked their keys inside the car or some such thing? Who who is exempt from that, David says? Who who always sees that failure of attention coming? Well, the answer, of course, is is nobody. So David is going to make two requests. He says who who never messes up just by distraction, right? This isn't anything willful.

This is just going astray, goofing, if you will. Who can perceive that they're about to stray? You usually figure out that your keys are in the car one second after you slam the the driver's door.

You realize that you left something on top of the car when you hear a funny noise and look in the rearview mirror and here's all the pages of your of your your college books or your Bible, you know, scattered all over the road, blowing quickly away.

We always realize it one second too late. Who who can see that coming, David says. So now he's going to make three requests, and the first one, and I mentioned this last time, it doesn't so much say cleanse me.

It says hold me guiltless. Let me not be charged with something secret, something hidden. Let me not get caught out by what I can't see.

It's it's in hiding, and I mentioned last time God gave this warning as far back as Genesis to Cain. If you do well, you'll be accepted, but if not, there's a croucher at the door. You walk out the door.

You don't necessarily check all the way around, and the croucher can can get you, and so you now you've been warned. The word of God came to Cain and and warned him that there's a croucher outside the door that he could not see, metaphorically speaking, inside the house. The word of God says, hey, as long as you do well, as long as you stay in the house, as long as you do what you're supposed to do, you're fine, but if not, if you want to walk out the house and go your own way, you think of the prodigal taking his goods and walking out of his father's house.

There's a croucher right out there. Now you've been warned. So David says, essentially, let me not be found guilty of getting waylaid, of something jumping out and getting me.

That's the first request in verse 12. Now in verse 13, he says, keep back your servant also from, and you have it translated here, presumptuous. This is also an extremely rare word.

What does it mean? It doesn't mean presumptuous. It comes from a root that means to boil over, something that boils over. So keep back your servant also from what boils over.

Is that what we're thinking? This actually means the arrogant, the proud. It is often translated the proud. Even in this verse, there are those who say that's how it should be translated.

Keep me back or keep back your servant from the proud. Let them, the proud, those who are impulsive, those who are, you know, pride typically creates impulsive behavior. And boiling over has the idea that it just suddenly gets out of hand.

You were cooking your stew and all of a sudden it's out of the pot. You didn't see that coming either, but instead of it being something hidden where you step in a snare or you are attacked by something you didn't see outside the door or in the bushes, this is something that overtly presumes to take you over. So he says, keep back your servant from the proud, the boiling over ones.

Let them not have dominion over me. Now this is a different kind of prayer because instead of

saying, keep me back from committing a sin that I want to commit, you know, just prevent me, bind my hand so I can't stick it in the cookie jar. What is he saying? There are external forces, both hidden and overt.

Some of them are down inside the pot where you can't see them. Others are boiling out of the pot. And he says, hold me guiltless from what I can't see, that wants to turn me aside and cause me to go astray, and hold me back from impulse or those who are impulsive.

Now can you think of a scriptural example where somebody decided they were going to do something impulsive and they were held back? Remember Balaam? How about David himself? Can you think of a case where he was all ready to go in and wreak some retribution on a man whose name reflected his wisdom, who had a very smart wife, ended up eventually being David's wife? Remember Nabal? Nabal, after David's men had protected his flocks and provided security for months, went in hoping to get some provisions, and Nabal said, no. And so David said, well, I believe we'll just come in and take it and knock you in the head while we're doing it. And what did Abigail do? And David thanked her for holding him back from this presumptuous act, this willful act that he was ready to perpetrate.

But it wasn't God going inside David's soul and changing his mind, was it? It was the effect of another believer. It was the effect of someone providing godly counsel, godly presence, godly advice that cooled David's anger and frustration and enabled him to be objective. So the upshot of this is we're not praying that God will change our heart and keep us from being willful.

David seems to be saying here that whether it is something that sneaks up on us or something that boils over and is very obvious, that we can be innocent, guiltless, and held back, whether it is somebody else's impulse or our own, that God will hold us long enough to reconsider, to give us a chance to use the resources that are in our soul, to take advantage of the warning of the statutes and ordinances and judgments that he just talked about. And he says, let them not have dominion in the same way that God is not going to overtake our chooser and make it choose for him. David says, I don't want presumption, my own or somebody else's, to have dominion over me.

I would like to make my decisions objectively, with consideration in the light of God's word, not be pushed, not have something boil over and force my hand, whether it's in me or outside of me. So it's a much more respectful prayer. It's respectful of God's judgment in giving us free will.

It also relies on the grace of God in giving us time to think before we are surprised or overtaken by the impulses of our own hearts or those of others. Then he says, I shall be blameless and I shall be guiltless of great transgression. It's interesting to me that when it says, uh, uh, cleanse me in verse 12 from, from what is hidden.

It's the same word that's back in verse six. There is nothing hidden from the heat of the sun. God's word will reveal those things that are hidden, whatever is crouching, whatever is, is lying

in wait to snare us.

And we can relax and have confidence that if we're focused on God's word, it is going to gird our souls. Our waste will be girded with truth. We have the full armor of God in that sense.

Then he concludes here in verse 14, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight. Oh Lord, my strength and my redeemer. And this is a wonderful prayer to pray.

It is one that I have prayed ever since I began, uh, endeavoring to teach the word of God. It is my silent prayer before every single Bible class I've ever taught. When I say let's pray and we don't say anything for a while, that is what is coming out of my soul and heading toward the throne of grace.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in the Lord's sight. As I do my best to, to, uh, draw our attention to the wonderful treasures in God's word. So it is a wonderful, uh, reminder that we want both that which is visible and overt, which is the words of our mouth and that which is secret and hidden the meditations of our heart, whether it is overt or covert, whether it is visible or invisible, whether other people are aware of it or whether they're not, may it be acceptable in God's sight.

Why? Because he is our strength. Literally the word here is our rock and redeemer. Now, why would he choose those two things of all of the qualities and roles that God has and the things that he is and the things that he does, uh, which we've seen in the earlier part of this Psalm, who God is and what God does is frequently revisited in the Psalms.

Why does David choose these two things? Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight. Oh Lord, this is the covenant name of God. You notice your small caps there.

This is the Tetragrammaton Yahweh. Oh Yahweh, personal name of God, my rock and my redeemer. Rock speaks of visible strength, right? This is our, our ability to cope, our ability to stand, our ability to be unshaken in the face of circumstances.

It's, a rock is pretty hard to miss. We want to be hidden in the cleft of the rock. We, that's, that is the strength of God in circumstance.

What about the second term? Redeemer, the Goel, the one who purchases. How visible is that? People can see spiritual strength in our lives when we are not faced by difficulties or by challenges. Uh, it doesn't get us down.

It doesn't rock us off our foundation, so to speak. But how does someone know you're redeemed? What is, what is David drawing attention to here? I want the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart to be acceptable in your sight. Oh Lord, you are my strength.

Others can see that. And you are my redeemer, which is between you and me. It's the horizontal and it's the vertical redemption and God's identity and role and function as, as redeemer.

Even in the old Testament, this is before the cross. This is before the David's greater son is going to come and accomplish that work. And yet David identifies the Lord as his redeemer.

How is he redeemed? What, what price was paid? Well, as we're going to see in Psalm 22, David understands that this price is paid in the mind of God, even though it is yet future. Redeemer. It is not the blood of goats and bulls that pays for sin.

It is God's redemption and only God's redemption that God recognizes. And David knows that. And he says, you are my redeemer, the redeemer.

It's an interesting thought to think back to the days of animal sacrifice and ritual picturing what would come and to realize that faithful and studious and reflective believers figured out from that what was coming. It's, it's remarkable that so many of those old Testament saints like Job, like Daniel, like Joshua, like David and many others you could name, saw what was coming based on these pictures and these shadows. How does that happen? I was thinking about the Christmas season and how Simeon had been assured by God that he would not depart this life until he had seen the salvation of Israel.

And I think how great would it be if you and I were qualified, if we're in the rapture generation to be assured by God ahead of time, that it would happen in our lifetime. Nobody knew the day or the hour that the Messiah was going to come the first time, but there were people that got a clue. It's going to be within this frame.

You're not assuming room temperature before you have seen the salvation of Israel. Well, had you ever thought it's equally possible that those in the, in the generation that are going to see the Lord Jesus return in the sky could receive that same promise, that same assurance. You have not because you ask not.

I've started asking the Lord, if I am in the rapture generation, Lord, could you let me know like you did Simeon? I would love to have that hope. I would love to be watching for the clues and be down at the temple waiting for that visit like he was. So you see this reflected when David and others like him in the Old Testament use terms like redeemer when redemption has not been accomplished yet, but they know what's coming and it's just as real to him as it is for us looking back.

We'll turn a couple of pages over quickly now. I just want to spend a few minutes getting into Psalm 22. We have no prospect of finishing it tonight, but we will get a start.

Psalm 22 dedicated to the chief musician set to the deer of the dawn, a Psalm of David. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me and from the words of my groaning? Oh my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not hear and in the night season

and I'm not silent, but you are holy enthroned in the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in you.

They trusted and you delivered them. They cried to you and were delivered. They trusted in you and were not ashamed.

But I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised by the people. All those who see me ridicule me. They shoot out the lip.

They shake the head saying he trusted in the Lord. Let him rescue him. Let him deliver him since he delights in him.

But you are he who took me out of the womb. You made me trust while on my mother's breasts. I was cast upon you from birth from my mother's womb.

You have been my God. Be not far from me for trouble is near for there is none to help. Many bulls have surrounded me.

Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me. They gape at me with their mouths like a raging and roaring lion. I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart is like wax. It is melted within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd and my tongue clings to my jaws.

You have brought me to the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded me. The congregation of the wicked has enclosed me.

They pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look and stare at me.

They divide my garments among them and for my clothing they cast lots. But you, O Lord, do not be far from me. O my strength, hasten to help me.

Deliver me from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth and from the horns of the wild oxen. You have answered me.

I will declare your name to my brethren. In the midst of the assembly, I will praise you. You who fear the Lord, praise him.

All you descendants of Jacob, glorify him and fear him, all you offspring of Israel. For he has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, nor has he hidden his face from him. But when he cried to him, he heard.

My praise shall be of you in the great assembly. I will pay my vows before those who fear him. The poor shall eat and be satisfied.

Those who seek him will praise the Lord. Let your heart live forever. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before

you.

For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he rules over the nations. All the prosperous of the earth shall eat and worship. All those who go down to the dust shall bow before him, even he who cannot keep himself alive.

A posterity shall serve him. It will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation. They will come and declare his righteousness to a people who will be born.

That he has accomplished this. He has done this." Well, you can see that it will take us a little bit of time to explore the riches found in this psalm. I merely want to address the beginning here, dedicated to the chief musician, a pawn, which we interpret as set to the name of a tune, and this is the Deer of the Dawn.

In earlier days, the British like to call deer hinds. You know, you've made my feet secure like hinds' feet. Those are, you know, mountain climbing deer feet.

So sometimes it's translated the hind of the dawn. We'll talk about this in a little bit more detail, but we don't have the tune anymore. We're fairly certain that this is a tune name.

So the name of the tune is sufficient for God's purposes. And what does it suggest? The doe of the dawn, the deer of the dawn. One suggestion is that hunters like to find and go deer hunting at dawn because they can use the element of surprise, sneak up on them in the dark, and as soon as it's light enough to see, they can make them their prey, their victims.

And that this tune may have been one of concern about perishing at the hands of others, those who would come out and make it their business to harm one. One thing you can say is that the initial claim here after, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me in the words of my groaning? David says here, oh my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not hear and in the night season and I'm not silent. So our immediate context talks about both the day and the night.

And if you have spent the day praying and you spent all night praying as the Lord Jesus often did, where are you after those two seasons? You're at the dawn and you are not the mighty lion. You are not the bear. You are not the ox.

You are the deer and your resources are limited after a day and a night. And here comes the dawn. What is your, if you're relying on fleetness of foot, sureness of foot, speed of escape, but you're exhausted.

What kind of a deer are you at the dawn? If you've been crying in the daytime and in the night season without any response, there is a lot of stress for the deer at dawn. So I think that's fairly safe to assume. I would also expect that this was like much of Israeli or Jewish music that you hear probably in a minor key.

It doesn't necessarily sound like a toe tapper to me, the doe of the dawn. It sounds like it would be melancholy or reflective certainly. And when these words are set to a tune, you wouldn't expect them.

I can't help but mention that I've heard upbeat arrangements, instrumental arrangements, big band arrangements of hymns. I recently was listening to one and it's extremely well done. And I know people have the best intentions in the world and for them it's wonderful.

But if you've got a snappy two-step dance beat going behind, low in the grave he lay, Jesus my savior, or I was sinking deep in sin, far from the one I heard most recently. There are just times when you don't want to have the music out of harmony and out of sync with the lyrics. And to create an upbeat arrangement of the old rugged cross, which was also on this CD.

And it's the best of intentions. I don't want or mean to be critical at all, but I just don't get it. If you've got horns and trombones ripping through, I will cling to the old rugged cross and it's kind of a finger snapper.

I can't get there. You can try to bring me along. I just can't.

I can't get on that boat. I fall in the water every time. So this tune, The Deer of the Dawn, David purposely said, I don't want these words set to any other tune, but this one.

And it's a contemplative and melancholy setting. Then he begins, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me? And from the words of my groaning, do you notice here, as we saw in Psalm 19, how many words are in italics? Let me read you a more literal rendering. And this is once again from Robert Alter's translation and commentary, which I like.

This is how he renders it more literally from Hebrew. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Far from my rescue are the words that I roar. Another way of ordering this to make a little more sense out of it to a Western mind is far from helping me are the words of my roaring.

This isn't so much groaning as a roar of agony, a roar of pain. Groaning is what all of us do once we get past a certain age, getting up, sitting down, reaching for something, tying your shoes, almost anything you can give out with a groan. This is a more agonized and forceful sound.

And roaring is an excellent translation of it. So if you leave out the italics, he says, why have you forsaken me? And this is my God. And it's the same in Hebrew as it is in the Aramaic of the New Testament when the Lord Jesus quotes this.

Eli, Eli is in verse one. But look at verse two when he says, Oh my God, I cry in the daytime. My God, you would think, well, that's Eli here also, but it's not.

It's Elohi. And there is a difference. There's always a significance when the names of God are employed.

El is God in his strength. And the question here is my strong one, my strong God proper. Why have you forsaken me? You are my rock.

You are my strength. You are the strong God, but you've left. I'm here and you are not.

And it is the aspect of strength from God, which one would want to be present at this time. And the strong God is not visible, is not present. And he says, I'm roaring here and help is no closer.

I roar, help does not come. People used to really get in trouble. Somebody makes a 911 call and the ambulance doesn't show.

The police don't show. Somebody is trapped. There's someone in the house.

They're huddled under a bed or in a closet with a phone. They're calling 911 and help doesn't come. Somebody passes out with a heart attack.

You call 911 and minutes are of the essence. Seconds are of the essence. And there's some delay.

The response is not adequate. You get the idea that there is this urgency in the roaring and the question, where's the help? I can name any number of promises and any number of expressions of confidence that I've had in the past. But here, when I really need you and I'm roaring, help is as far away as the strong God and the strong God is not here.

So then in verse two, when he says, Oh my God, he switches to Elohi and Elohi, Elohim, my Elohei emphasizes a different aspect of God. And this is the God who is revered. This is the God who is worthy of respect and of fear and of honor.

The view of God here is that he is the Holy one, the creator God who is deserving of our loyalty and our faith and our praise and our love and our service. And so David shifts here from saying, I could really use your presence in terms of your strength. He says, you are the one that I reverence and that I worship and that I honor.

And I cry to you. I have often expressed words of praise and worship. Here I am crying in a time of need in the daytime, but you do not hear.

And this is here in the sense of response. David doesn't seriously believe that God can't hear, or he wouldn't waste his time with the Psalm. This is here in the sense of being deaf to someone's plea.

It appears as though God is not listening. I cry in the daytime, but you do not acknowledge it. You don't hear in the sense of response.

And I cry in the night season. Notice this is not just the night. This is the night season.

This is the duration of the night. This is hours on end in the night. And I'm not silent.

This again gets back to the idea of lifting up one's voice to God. If you, if you cry out for wisdom and lift up your voice for understanding evening and morning and at noon, while I pray and what cry aloud and he will hear my voice. Psalm 55, 17, right? Evening, morning, and at noon, I pray and cry aloud.

There's a strong biblical witness for spoken verbal prayer. Even when you're by yourself. Um, how did they know Daniel was praying in the window? He was praying out loud.

He wasn't sitting there, staring off into space, having a silent prayer. Three times a day, Daniel went to his window and people could hear what he was saying and who he was talking to. And it was the God of Israel.

So David says in the night season, other people may be trying to sleep. I'm praying. And anybody in the vicinity knows it.

Why do you not hear me in the day and in the night? Well, you cannot even begin this Psalm without thinking of the Lord Jesus on the cross. And with the benefit of our hindsight, we know why it is that God would not, and indeed could not be present in strength and in holiness, which is the object of reverence. He could not be there as a Lee, and he could not be there as Elohi at this particular moment.

Why? In the case of the Lord Jesus and what it says, he made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, made him to be sin. He's being bruised for our iniquities. He's being wounded for our transgressions by his stripes.

We are healed. That is not a moment where God can maintain contact with the Lord Jesus. There is an answer to the question.

Why have you forsaken me? Why is it? It is the hour of judgment. It is the presence of sin. It is the power of sin actively present and in the process of being broken and being this redemption that we talked about is going to be secured.

David prophetically experiences this. His own experience foreshadows and anticipates what his son, the Lord Jesus, is going to go through. Now, David is experiencing this absence of God's presence or the presence of his absence, whichever way you want to look at it, and he's crying out and there is no answer.

Can David rightfully say there's something wrong here? God has made promises and he's not here. Is this a legitimate complaint? If you rely on God in your time of need, here's a time of need, and God's not there. What's going on? Here's the thought I would like to offer you as we conclude for tonight.

David could not possibly know the fullness of what would happen during Jesus hours on the cross, but David's experience in reaching this place where he wrote this psalm, he's in extremis and he's crying out to God. It's deer of the dawn time and God has withheld his presence,

withheld an answer. It is as though he's not there and David is crying out.

What is God's purpose in not answering David? It isn't that David has somehow sinned. David knows how to be cleansed. David knows if God's not answering, it could be that your iniquities are separated between you and your God and your sins have hit his face.

His ear is not heavy that it can't hear. His arm is not shortened that it can't save. Sin could be a problem.

David knows how to solve that, right? And yet mysteriously, David is in extremis and God is not answering. Why? God knows something David doesn't. David is going to author inspired scripture that is going to sustain his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, on the cross.

David is never going to give out with this psalm and with the expression of need for God, inspired words from God through David that are going to be in the soul of the Lord Jesus Christ and sustain his humanity on the cross. Knowing what David knows now, was it worth it to go through this grievous experience and to feel as though God was not near and to express that in this psalm? The expression in this psalm serves not just the Lord Jesus, but everybody who for purposes known only to God cannot be delivered right now, cannot experience the close personal presence of God right now. God has a purpose that is inscrutable or invisible to us often, but he has a purpose.

And nowhere do you see that inscrutable purpose that David here is clearly puzzled by and frustrated by and is roaring about. You think of Job. We wouldn't have the book of Job if he had just simply lived a prosperous life and had 14 sons and six daughters to begin with and had never experienced loss and had never experienced death and had never had the hand of Satan set free to persecute him and to test him.

Could Job possibly know, could he have any inkling of how meaningful and how helpful his experience would be for hundreds of millions of believers all down through history in the day that he lost his sons and daughters, in the day that he broke out with Boazes, in the day that his wife said, curse God and die? How could he possibly know how important his faithfulness would be? How important his remonstrances and his rebuttals to what the three friends would say, setting up the response of Elihu, who is a wonderful anticipation of the Lord Jesus himself. There's no way he could possibly know. And there's no way God could explain it to him and say, now Job, I'm about to have something really severe happen to you here, but just bide your time.

I've got a purpose. We know this already. David is in this situation because it is going to benefit countless others, the most important of whom is the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is going to quote this Psalm on the cross.

How would you like something that you express to God in your hour of need and in your time of trial, in your reflections and in your meditations? How would you like that to somehow turn up in an inspired scripture and be used by God to bless innumerable hordes of other people?

Well, how do you know he's not? You don't. It's faith that God knows what he's doing. When God seems far away and we've checked and we've examined ourselves to see if we're in the faith, we've confessed our known sins.

We are doing everything we know to do. We're crying out to God. We are in pain.

We are in need. It is deer in the dawn time. And God is far away and we roar and help does not come.

It's raw pain. God has a purpose and you'll never see it more clearly illustrated than here. David was taxed to the max when he wrote this Psalm, but look at what its presence in scripture accomplishes.

It ought to be an encouragement to us that we don't understand what's going on. And we persist not blindly, but often without full knowledge of what God is up to. It's not blind faith, but it is trust in what we can't see and don't know.

We will understand it better by and by. It is up to us to follow David's example and to realize that further down in the Psalm, you have answered me. Verse 21, God is present.

God will answer and look at the aftermath. I will declare your name to my brethren, my relatives, my descendant, Yeshua is coming. And David's declaration and victory song in the last half of this Psalm is also something the Lord Jesus knew by heart and was encouraged by and sustained by during the greatest hour of trial anybody has ever faced.

So when you think about these opening lines, just remember somebody said them before Jesus and he didn't have a clue why God allowed him to reach that extreme point. But he knows now. Do you think he figured it's worth it? Is he glad that he was faithful? Is he glad that he stuck it out? Is he glad that he trusted God even when it didn't look like God was paying attention? Well, you know he is.

And you know, we will be as well on that day when the secrets of men's hearts are revealed by my gospel, as Paul says. Let's close here in a word and we'll pick up next Thursday, looking at this wonderful, very dense and meaty piece of spiritual food here in Psalm 22. But let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, we do thank you for your grace and your faithfulness, for your wisdom. Your ways are so much higher than our ways. Your thoughts are higher than our thoughts.

We are humbled when we come into your presence and we ask you to, just as the man did when he came before the Lord Jesus and he said, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief. In our hours of uncertainty, our hours of difficulty, our hours of trial, we want to trust. And as David said in the 19th Psalm, we ask you to sustain us from impulse, from that which sneaks up on us, from that which would lead us astray, so that the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts will be acceptable in your sight and can be used by you to reflect your

glory, to reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus, and hopefully to be a blessing in the lives of others now and in the ages to come.

We ask and pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.