

## FIND STABILITY WHEN CONSIDERING MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH

2 Samuel 22:1-7; 23:1-7

*If you were considering a building, what features would give you evidence that the building was stable?*

- It would not be easily moved,
- It would have a feeling of firmness,
- It would be upright, etc.

*What would cause the building to have these features?*

- A solid foundation,
- Well secured to the foundation,
- Good strong materials used in the construction,
- Good bonds in assembling the structure,
- A good and well-thought out plan, etc.

*What about a relationship? What would be the features that would give evidence that a relationship was stable?*

- It would not be easily moved,
- It would have a feeling of firmness,
- It would be upright, etc.

*What would cause the relationship to have these features?*

- A solid foundation of mutual care and respect,
- Being dedicated to this foundation,
- Good moral fiber in all the participants, and
- Bonds of love to hold it all together.

The life of David had a lot of instability. However, there was one relationship he had that was stable and that was his relationship with God. When all the other relationship in life were falling apart, David could find security in God. David wrote about that relationship as a way to offer thanks to God for the security he found in God's salvation. Chapter 22 is essentially the same as Psalms Chapter 18.

### Matters Concerning God

<sup>1</sup> And David spoke the words of this song to the LORD in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. 2 Samuel 22:1

If 2 Samuel 22 is close to being chronological, then we can conclude that this song was likely written near the end of David's life since 2 Samuel 23:1 tells us what follows are the final words of David. The introduction to this chapter tells that it was written "in the day" David was delivered from Saul. If this psalm was actually penned near the end of David's life, then "in the day" would have to mean "with regard to the occasion of the day" when God delivered him from the hand of Saul. As we read through this song, we can also see descriptions that remind us of the deliverance of Israel from the Egyptians and the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai.

It is interesting that David made a distinction between all his enemies and Saul. Even though Saul counted David as his enemy, David did not view Saul that way. David consistently had regard for Saul as the Lord's anointed.

In expressions of praise and thanksgiving, most of us are not likely to write a song or a poem. David used his ability to express praise to God in this way. What other ways can we use to express praise and thanksgiving to God? (Congregational singing, prayer and devotional time,

listening to or reading praise songs, etc.)

<sup>2</sup> He said, “The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; <sup>3</sup> My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My savior, You save me from violence. 2 Samuel 22:2-3

David uses various metaphors in describing God: Rock, Fortress, Deliverer, Shield, Horn of Salvation, Stronghold, Refuge, and Savior. What benefits do these images trigger in your mind? Strength, stability, security, safety, serenity and protection. In the Psalm that parallels this passage, it begins with “I love you Lord, My strength.”

When we see the hand of God at work in our lives, then our hearts overflow with love for Him. Just as a little child see his earthly father as the epitome of strength and the source of supply, we look to God the Father as our only Provision for every need of life (now and everlasting).

### Matters Concerning Death

<sup>4</sup> “I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies. <sup>5</sup> “For the waves of death encompassed me; The torrents of destruction overwhelmed me; <sup>6</sup> The cords of Sheol surrounded me; The snares of death confronted me. <sup>7</sup> “In my distress I called upon the LORD, Yes, I cried to my God; And from His temple He heard my voice, And my cry for help *came* into His ears. 2 Samuel 22:4-7

Crying out to the Lord for help is something a lot of people do. You can observe when people are unexpectedly in danger, it is not unusual for them to say something like, “God, help us!” People who would not pray in a public worship setting, will pray aloud when they senses danger. In the tumultuous life of David - especially in the early days - he had many opportunities to cry out to the Lord for help. The thing that David remembered was that when he did cry out to the Lord, help was there. You might argue that since David recognized God was worthy to be praised that he called upon the Lord even when he was not in trouble. That is certainly a better way to do things. We need to keep the line of communications open so that we maintain an ongoing reliance on God and his power and strength to protect us from our enemies.

For most of us, the greatest enemy is seen as death and the grave. Fear of death paralyzes us and prevents us from accomplishing the work God has for us to do. In Christ, we find that we are freed from this ultimate fear since He has conquered death and we no longer need to fear it.

Again, David used metaphors to draw a word picture of the dangers he faced that could lead to death and the grave. Many times it seems as if troubles do come on as waves - it all happens so fast that it seems like a storm had struck our lives. Not only do troubles come like waves, but so often we get a sense that there is no way out - we feel trapped and entangled. All this is enough to cause distress.

When things all around us are falling apart we really do need some stability in our lives. David found that stability when he called to the Lord in his distress. The good testimony that David could give was that God heard his voice.

**On what occasions have you called upon the Lord and found deliverance that you could associate with an answer to prayer?**

Many prayers have gone out from foxholes during times of war. Many prayers have emerged from storm cellars when a tornado was about to hit an area. Many prayers have been made when sickness and death were the concern. God has promised to hear the prayers and to protect those who belong to Him. We can have the same kind of confidence David had when we remember the times when God answered prayer.

### Matters Concerning Life

<sup>1</sup> Now these are the last words of David. David the son of Jesse declares, The man who was raised on high declares,

The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet psalmist of Israel, <sup>2</sup>“The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue. <sup>3</sup>“The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me, ‘He who rules over men righteously, Who rules in the fear of God, <sup>4</sup>Is as the light of the morning *when* the sun rises, A morning without clouds, *When* the tender grass *springs* out of the earth, Through sunshine after rain.’ 2 Samuel 23:1-4

In the first stanza, the writer of Second Samuel identified David as **son of Jesse . . . the man exalted by the Most High, the man anointed by the God of Jacob, and Israel’s singer of songs**. There is a noticeable progress from the humble son of a Bethlehemite commoner to the poetically gifted king of Israel, a development which was generally recognized to be the result of David having been chosen and anointed by the Lord. (Some commentaries imply that David had written this first verse about himself. However, it appears that these descriptors were written about David. David’s words start in verse two.)

David was conscious of being God’s instrument when he wrote that God’s Spirit spoke by or through him. If you read the Psalms, the inspiration of the words can be clearly seen. Many of the Psalms are Messianic and prophetic and their fulfillment is evident in the life and work of Jesus.

Notice that a distinction is made in verse three in that not only did God speak BY David, God also spoke TO him. From what God spoke to him, we can see several things. First is an implied expectation for those who rule in the affairs of men. That expectation is twofold: first, they must rule in righteousness and second they must rule in a way that shows reverence for God. Ruling in righteousness would be with clear insight into what the word of God says about each and every matter. Ruling in the fear of the Lord would be to do so with a realization that the ruler is subject to the higher authority of God Himself.

We also see that it is clear God has high praise for those who do what they are called to do in a righteous way and in a way that honors God (that is, in the fear of the Lord). The specific area mentioned here was about those who rule; however, I think that, by implication, this can be applied to whatever God has called us to do in life.

Light of the morning: Think of a sunrise that greets a new, cloudless day and the refreshing feeling we get as the sun comes up and dispels the darkness. It is somewhat an omen of hope for a new day.

Tender new grass: People who are familiar with raising grazing animals see encouragement when rains bring forth new grass for the flocks. They would also see the growth of grass as something for which there is not a good substitute.

This stanza tells us how God views those who do life in righteousness and in reverence to God. If we are looking for things in our lives that will please God, then honoring Him and obeying Him are key elements in whatever we do.

The next three verses show us a contrast of the outcomes for those who operate from a foundation of righteousness and reverence for God and the outcome for those who operate from a worldly value system and ignore God.

<sup>5</sup>“Truly is not my house so with God? For He has made an everlasting covenant with me, Ordered in all things, and secured; For all my salvation and all *my* desire, Will He not indeed make *it* grow? <sup>6</sup>“But the worthless, every one of them will be thrust away like thorns, Because they cannot be taken in hand; <sup>7</sup>But the man who touches them Must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear, And they will be completely burned with fire in *their* place.”

Verse 5 is handled in two distinctly different ways by various translations of the Bible. One group of translators has David saying that his house (family) had not ruled in righteousness and fear of the Lord, yet God had blessed his family. The first part of the verse would read as follows: “Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant.” The other group of translators has David saying that his house (family) had indeed ruled in righteousness and reverence for God and as a result God had blessed his family. The first part of the verse would then read as follows: “Yea, does not my house stand so with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant.”

The argument for the first group looks at all the problems David's family had following his sin with Bathsheba and then concluded that David was making a statement regarding the grace of God to bless even though there were consequences from the sin he had committed. The second group point to the fulfillment of the promised blessing to the coming of the Messianic reign of Christ who was of the house and lineage of David.

Another possibility is that David is remembering what the Lord spoke to him BEFORE his sin with Bathsheba and before the consequences of that sin created so much instability in his family. The words of the prophecy did indeed apply to David's house prior to the indiscretion. Things in his life were well ordered and secure, his kingdom was growing and it was evident that God was causing him to prosper.

This condition could be easily contrasted with the fate of those who were (in the language of the King James version) the "sons of Belial." This expression is usually translated as "worthlessness." It was frequently used in the Old Testament as a proper name. It is first used in Deut 13:13 In the New Testament it is found only in 2Co 6:15 where it is used as a name of Satan, the personification of all that is evil. It is translated "wicked" in Deut 15:9 and Ps 41:8, Ps 101:3, Prov 6:12. The expression "son" or "man of Belial" means simply a worthless, lawless person. (See also Judges 19:22, 20:13 1Sam 1:16, 2:12.)

The lawless ones are pictured as thorns that cannot be handled except with elaborate protection and are fit for nothing except to be burned. Most of us probably have probably encountered folks like that. When you are around them, you feel that you really need to be careful lest you get hurt. They are good examples of what NOT to be in our relationships with others.

The comparison of the righteous and the wicked should cause us to want to be as the righteous. God protected and blessed David throughout his life and perpetuated his dynasty in spite of the tragic failings of David's family. Unknown to David at the time, God's plans were intended for the protection and blessing of all humanity. Such a monumental work could only be completed by the coming of David's far greater Son, Jesus. He is the ultimate Source of dependable stability in life.