

Psalm 138

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, will you turn to Psalm 138, and if you've got your finger in 2 Samuel 7, that would be helpful too.
- David is so thankful to the Lord who had given him rest from all his enemies. We read that in the very first verse of 2 Samuel 7.
- And he was so thankful that he wanted to express his thankfulness in a tangible way. And he wanted, therefore, to build a house of cedar.
- And I've got no idea why that came to his mind. Maybe he was just walking one day, and all of a sudden, like a ding, I'll build a house of cedar. I don't know.
- Maybe it was a far more serious piece of thinking than that. But one gets the impression there's a spontaneity about this because of the way in which the Lord responds to that.
- [0 : 5 8] And there's a godly prophet. His name is Nathan. And he counsels Nathan. And Nathan said, well, whatever you have in mind, do it, for the Lord is with you.
- So you think, let's say, okay, you know, I've seen the prophets. I've got this idea. Let's go ahead. David goes to bed. And Nathan, this prophet, gets a vision from the Lord.
- Because that night, the Lord speaks to him and turns the desire to do something for God into God, promising to do something for David. And the Lord completely turns the tables, as it were, upon David's desire to build a house of cedar.
- And as we read through 2 Samuel 7, the second half of that chapter is taken up with David's overawed in response to what God had said through Nathan, the prophet.
- So this evening, I want us to look at Psalm 138. And the echoes, I believe it has, with 2 Samuel 7. There's no direct reference about Psalm 138 being linked to 2 Samuel.
- [2 : 1 1] If you call Matthew Henry and look him up, he'll say there is, it is now the material not profitable to consider any context for Psalm 138.
- But another well-known expositor of the Psalms, W.S. Plumer says, very sadly, that many commentators miss the point and the connection between Psalm 138 and 2 Samuel 7.
- So there we are. I'm going to take W.S. Plumer's connection and others as well, because I think there are some direct responses from, we find, in Psalm 138 to David's experience with Nathan and his desire to build this house of cedar.
- And even if I'm wrong, it actually doesn't matter, because what I want to say and want to show is something that goes beyond the immediate context.
- As I said at the beginning, it's all to do with not King David, but King David's, great David's, greater son. So let's have a look at this Psalm, just briefly go through each verse line by line and see what questions it raises and what things we can learn from it.
- [3 : 3 6] David begins, I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart. Before the gods, I will sing your praise. So maybe the first thing you ask yourself is, what does he mean, before the gods?
- Does David believe in many gods? Well, clearly, as we read 2 Samuel 7, that's not so, because he believes there is only one god.

So what he means by, there are many gods, before the gods I will sing your praise. What he's saying there is that all he sees around him are nations who have false gods, who have other gods.

And as a king, a mighty king who had subdued all of these nations, they were just being shown that their gods were false gods.

So when he's saying before the gods I will sing your praise, it's before these false gods and the nations around him, the nations that he had subdued, that these were not gods.

[4 : 39] They were figments of their imagination. In 2 Samuel 22, we read, How great are you, sovereign law. This is David. There is no one like you.

There is no god but you. As we have heard with our own ears. And so this psalm of praise continues with the next verse.

Well, this raises another question, doesn't it?

What does he mean by bowing down towards God's holy temple? David never saw the temple being built. He made provision for it but he never saw it.

So what does it mean by saying that before God's holy temple he was going to praise God's name? Well, David had received this promise via Nathan from the Lord.

[5 : 37] And we read it in 2 Samuel 7 verse 11. It says this, And then in verse 16, he repeats that same promise.

It says the Lord repeating it, he says, Your house and your kingdom will endure forever. Before me, your throne will be established forever.

God is promising to David that this temple is going to be built. So as far as David is concerned, and as far as God is concerned, the temple is built. It's something that he foresees.

God is foretelling that this is what is going to happen. And it's these two promises, this same promise repeated twice, it's like God saying yes and amen to his own promises.

You know, to be sure, to be sure. You know, God will do as he promises. David, we know, eventually gives the task to Solomon to build the temple.

[6 : 57] But before that, David believes what God has promised. And we read that towards the end of 2 Samuel chapter 7.

David believed that. He received this vision. God said, No, you're not going to build me a temple, but I'm going to establish your house forever and ever. And this temple is really built as far as David is concerned because his own flesh and blood was to establish that kingdom.

God will fulfill his word because his name depends on it. That's what David saw. David saw that God has spoken and for the honor of God's name, that God will fulfill his promises.

And that's why he says in the second half of verse 2, he says, You have exalted above all things your name and your word. Now, what does this mean?

You have exalted above all things your name and your word. What is higher than God's name? What is deeper and more profound than God's word?

[8 : 11] The New Living Testament puts it like this. I do like this translation. It says, Your promises are backed by all the honor of your name. That's the paraphrase of that.

Your promises are backed by all the honor of your name. That's the paraphrase of you have exalted above all things your name and your word. So what does that mean? Well, we'll come back to that later.

And we'll see what this name and this word actually means. David goes on in verse 3, When I called you, you answered me.

You made me bold and stout-hearted. And this is an experience of all Christians, isn't it? That when we're full of joy and praise when God answers prayer.

You know, when we ask God for salvation and put our trust in him, he fills us with joy. When we go through our lives and we ask him to answer prayer, sometimes a general prayer, sometimes a very specific.

[9 : 08] He answers and he makes us happy and joyful. But it also makes us bolder. And so when someone is converted by, you know, answering the prayers of his people, we don't sort of say, Oh, well, that's good.

What we do, we say, Well, Lord, you've got to save Fred and you've got to save Mary. And there's Tom and there's Joe as well. And, you know, we suddenly get, you know, boldness in God's presence, don't we?

Because we've seen God answer prayer. Because John has just been converted. And so our hearts are full. And we think, Well, if he can convert, John, he can convert. And so our vision widens and expands.

And this is David's experience. In 2 Samuel 7, verse 27, he says, Lord Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, I will build a house for you.

So your servant has found courage to pray the prayer to you, this prayer to you. The promise of future blessings was to David a spur to pray more extensively.

[10 : 19] And what does he pray for? What does he pray for? Well, he prays, verse 4, May all the kings of the earth praise you, O Lord, when they hear the words of your mouth.

May they sing of the ways of the Lord, for the glory of the Lord is great. It may be that David is envisioning the temple becoming a great draw to many nations.

It was in the time of the Lord that people, specifically Jews, came up and those who were converted to Judaism came up several times a year to the temple that had been built.

But maybe David is envisioning that there was going to be a great gathering to this great God in this great temple. That's one interpretation we could put to that when he says, may all the kings of the earth praise you, O Lord.

David has seen the overpowering of his enemies around about him, but he's not triumphalistic. He doesn't sort of say, ah, got them, got them beaten, I'm going to keep them beaten.

[11 : 24] No, his prayer winds, his desire is for his people to know this great God that he knows. And so hence this verse 4 and verse 5 becomes an international prayer, becomes a prayer for all nations.

And there are lots of other places. One psalm, Psalm 83, particularly says this, let them know that you, that's them know, the nations around about, that you whose name is the Lord, that you alone are the most high over all the earth.

He wants his experiences to demonstrate to people that God is working and that he wants them to know that he, that God is most high over all the earth.

And the context of Psalm 83 is actually a judgmental psalm. It's saying, bring judgment and let them know that you're God most high. But in this psalm, Psalm 138, he's saying, may all the kings of the earth praise you, have defeated them.

You know, they're all, they're all vassals around about me. But in wrath, remember mercy, Lord. In wrath, bring your grace to bear upon these kings round about so that they may sing of the ways of the Lord.

[12 : 44] For the glory of the Lord is great. The next verse, we have a continuation of David's inner heart.

It says here that, though the Lord is on high, verse 6, he looks on the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar. David here is expressing a deep sense of unworthiness.

It's as if he's saying, well, why me? Why me, oh Lord? Look at what we read in verses 18 and 19 of 2 Samuel 7.

Then King David went in. This is when Nathan had brought him the word. David went in and sat before the Lord and said, who am I? Who am I? A sovereign Lord.

And what is my family that you have brought me this far? And as if it were not enough in your sight, sovereign Lord, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant.

[13 : 46] Is this your usual way of dealing with men, oh sovereign Lord? And it's amazing. David is overwhelmed by God's great condescension towards him.

And he's humbled by it. In the parallel passage in 1 Chronicles 18, this phrase that, though the Lord is on high, he looks on the humble, but the proud he knows from afar.

In 1 Chronicles 18, he rephrases it like this. Sorry, I just got lost there. Let's step back. In 2 Samuel 7, 18 and 19, where he said, who am I?

The parallel passage is 1 Chronicles 18. And it's rephrased like this. It says, you have looked on me as though I were the most exalted of men, oh Lord God.

And, you know, this great amazement that God should stoop and bless David. You know, pride is our greatest enemy, isn't it, in drawing near to God.

[14 : 52] Pride drives the Lord away from us. But David's worship is his humble praise and his desire to say thank you in wanting to build a temple.

God, as it were, turned the tables on him and is telling him about great blessing that is to come. And without the same attitude, will our blessings be any less than when we want to see the house of the Lord, the Lord's house built up?

You know, can God give us less than David? You know, when we desire to build a house of the Lord up, when we desire to live and serve one another, when we desire to go out and preach the gospel, will God do less for us?

Well, there's a sense in which he should do more for us. Because we know the foundation upon what these things are set upon. They're set upon the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that he has empowered the church with his Holy Spirit to go out and preach the gospel to every creature. We have the fulfillment of all these types and shadows.

[16 : 09] And so God is bound to bless us if we are faithful to him and if we are humbled before him. Humility before the Lord is the gateway into great blessing and great glory to God.

So that with that in mind, David is able to end this psalm in verse 7 by saying this. So I walk in the midst of trouble. You preserve my life. You stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes.

And with your right hand, you save me. Verse 7. Well, what happened?

Verse 7 of 2 Samuel is a sandwich. Chapter 6 is David. It says that David, the Lord has subdued all his enemies. Chapter 8 is we read about David subduing more enemies.

Life was a constant fight for David. But at moments in time, all the enemies were subdued. And his spiritual life, his physical life was a lifelong fight against the enemy.

[17 : 18] External enemies, internal enemies. And so he's saying, though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life. You stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes.

God will keep us. Your right hand will save me. And on a personal level and a spiritual level, David is yet to face his greatest challenges.

And his greatest challenges are yet to come. The temptation of Abasheba and all that that brought. And Absalom's rebellion, which was the greatest heartache for David that made such a great impact upon him, which we read much in the Psalms.

So, like David, we too face many challenges. But in the midst of trouble, he will preserve my life. And whether they're easy or good, or easy or hard, rather, we know that the Lord has plans to prosper us.

And to not to harm us. To give us a hope. And to give us a future. So, his plans are purposeful. And that is why he finishes the Psalm with verse 8.

[18 : 27] The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me. Your love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not abandon the works of your hand. David is assured of God's unfailing, steadfast, loving kindness.

But also the eternal destiny that the Lord has for him. At the end of his response to the prophet, bringing the vision that he had from the Lord, Nathan.

He says, Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight. For you, sovereign Lord, has spoken. And your blessings, with your blessings, the house of your servant will be blessed forever.

God will fulfill his purposes for David. And he will do it for us. And he will not abandon the works of his hands. What God has started in us, he will continue and complete until the day of redemption.

It's a reflection of David's dependency, this last verse, upon God. And his humility and faith in God's name. God's name and God's word.

[19 : 41] God's name and God. Now, with that, let me just finish with looking back at Psalm 138, verse 2.

Psalm 138, verse 2 says, You have exalted above all things your name and your word. It's an important phrase because it makes a connection between God's assurances to David and how these assurances can apply to us today.

How do we do that? Well, last week, Peter was dealing with Moses and the burning bush, wasn't he? And Moses said to God, suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, the God of your fathers has sent me to you.

And they asked me, what is his name? Then what shall I tell them? And God said to Moses, I am who I am. That is what you are to say to the Israelites.

I am has sent me to you. And we learn from that that a good name or a good reputation is important. It's important that you wouldn't employ somebody who had a bad name, would you?

[20 : 57] If you're an employer. Because the name speaks about the character of the individual. What the person is really like. Not what it says on the CV.

CVs lie, don't they? Or can lie. They don't give the whole truth. But if you have a report about somebody and it's a good report about that person's character. Even in the deficiencies of the CV.

You would say, yeah, but he's a good person. He's a good woman. He's got a good track record. People like her and trust her. Him and her. So the name is important.

And the name of God I am is highly significant. Because it's an expression of God's unchanging character. It is his name. And will not have it profaned by anyone.

The third commandment says you shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God in vain. It's an indication of how exalted the name of God is. And we read in this second verse of Psalm 138.

[21 : 59] You've exalted above all things your name and your word. In Ezekiel 20. It's a really important chapter. Ezekiel 20. Four times a phrase is repeated.

And this is just one example. But the children rebelled against me. They did not follow my decrees. They were not careful to keep my laws. Of which I said the person who obeys them will live by them.

And they desecrated my Sabbath. So I said I will pour up my wrath on them. And spend my anger against them in the wilderness. But I withheld my hand.

And for the sake of my name. I did what would keep it from being profaned in the eyes of the nations. And what it is. What God is saying is that.

I cannot destroy this wayward people Israel. Because of my name. Because I have promised to bring them out of the promised land. I have promised to establish out of Egypt into the promised land.

[23 : 00] And establish them there. Here they now are in exile because of their rebellion. But I still won't abandon them. Because if I do. My name will be profaned. My name will be a byword.

And it's one of the greatest arguments in prayer. That we can come to the Lord. And say Lord your name is being profaned in this.

What are you going to do about it? And God will move. He'll move everything for the sake of his great name. Now going back to David.

The promises made to him were eternal. And that's forever. The difficult promises. Because repeatedly in 2 Samuel 7.

You have this phrase forever. And eternally. And they could not be fulfilled by an earthly king. Or even a series of earthly kings.

[23 : 56] God could not fulfill his promises through earthly kings. But his promises had to be fulfilled. He'd made them. He was not going to allow his name to be profaned.

So how could God make this happen? Well Peter's preaching. This is Apostle Peter. But Apostle Peter. Not Peter Robinson. Peter's preaching in the book of Acts.

Goes to great lengths to show the fulfillment. Of an eternal king. In the likeness of David. Through great David's greater son. In the book of Acts.

In the very first sermon. Peter does an exposition of Psalm 2. And other passages. Showing that this king. That the Messiah that was succumbed.

Was in fact the Lord Jesus Christ. The promise found in this psalm. And the promise found in 2 Samuel. And many other parts. Was fulfilled in Jesus.

[24 : 55] And so God's name is continued. And established. And exalted. And lifted up. And elevated. And displayed. In fluorescent lights.

The name that is above every name. Is Jesus. Is Jesus the son of God. Jesus great David's greater son. On many occasions.

Jesus angered the religious leaders. With his claims of being the word. We all know John 1.1. And John 1.14. Don't we? In the beginning was the word.

And the word was with God. And the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. Verse 14. And the word became flesh. And made his dwelling among us.

And we have seen his glory. The glory. Of the one and only son. Who came to the. From the father. Full of grace and truth. Jesus is the word of God. And Jesus has been exalted.

[25 : 51] As the word of God. He has been exalted. Above all things. But Jesus is also. The name. Of God. As well. Sprinkled throughout.

John's gospel. Is. Are the seven. I am statements. And these really angered. The. Some of the hearers. Because they didn't want to receive. What Jesus was saying. When he said.

I am the bread of life. I am the light of the world. I am the resurrection. And the life. When Jesus said. I am. He was saying. I am. I am God. And plainly so.

And it is. This great lordship. That is. Taken up. And personified. In Jesus Christ. So when. David says. You have exalted. Above all things.

Your name. And your word. We. We can. Take this scripture. And we can just raise it. As high as possible. Because we will never get. To the top of it. Because Jesus. Is there. He is lord. And that hymn.

[26 : 48] In Philippians. Isn't it. That. At the name of Jesus. Every knee shall bow. In heaven. And on earth. And under the earth. And every tongue. Confess that Jesus Christ. Is lord.

To the glory of God. The father. That's the name. And the word. That is. The Jesus. Whom. We serve. Whom we. Love. And whom we honor. And who has saved us.

And so we've gone from. A thousand years before Christ was born. Psalm 138. To Samuel 7. We've gone to. Two thousand years ago.

When the lord was on this earth. And he said. I am. And when he declared himself. To be the word of God. The living word of God. And then we go into. Into the future. We go to the end of the age.

When Jesus returns. In glory. And we read about the name. And the word again. This conquering hero. In Revelation 19. Return.

[27 : 44] Turning on a white horse. And making final judgment over sin. This is what it says. About Jesus. I saw heaven standing open.

And there before me was a white horse. Whose rider is called. Faithful and true. The word. With justice he judges. And wages war.

His eyes are like glazing fire. And on his head are many crowns. He has a name. Written on him. So that no one knows. But he himself. He is dressed in a robe.

Dipped in blood. And his name is the word of God. And the armies of heaven. Were following him. Riding on white horses. And dressed in fine linen. White and clean.

Coming out of his mouth. As a sharp sword. With which to strike down the nations. He will rule them. With an iron scepter. He treads the winepress. Through the fury of his wrath.

[28 : 40] Of God almighty. On his robe. And on his thigh. He has this name written. King of kings. And lord of lords. David said.

You have exalted above all things. Your name. And your word. And Jesus. It goes on to say. In that same chapter. Is the alpha. And the omega. He is the first to last. He is the beginning.

The end. He is everything. Nothing could be exalted higher. Than Jesus Christ. For he is the name. And he is the word. And he is the king of kings.

And he is the lord of lords. Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that amazing? That this is the Jesus. Whom we serve. He is not some.

Wishy washy. Telly type person. He is the word. The living word. Of the living God. So how can we apply this? How can we apply this? Jesus says this.

[29 : 37] In his great high priestly prayer. In John 17. 10. All I have is yours. And all you have is mine. And glory has come to me. Through them. I will remain in the world.

No longer. But they are still in the world. And I am coming to you. Holy father. Jesus never used that phrase. Other than this place. Holy father.

It is the only time you have. The word holy father. In the bible. Holy father. Protect them by the power. Of your name. The name. You gave me.

So that they may be one. As we are one. So the first application. Is that we are protected. By the name. That was given to the lord. Jesus Christ. That has been given to us.

And we are protected. By that name. Isn't that wonderful? You know. Nothing can harm us. There is neither life nor death. Heaven or hell.

[30 : 33] Nothing can separate us. From the love of God. Because we are protected. By the name. The second application. Is it is a source. Of great encouragement. To know that our prayers.

Are made. In the name of Jesus. They carry the greatest authority. And like David. They should make us bold. In prayer. Shouldn't they? You know.

Because we pray in the name. We don't use it. As some kind of formula. At the end of a prayer. We pray in the name. If you ask anything. In my name. I will do it. And that's to.

A saint of God. Whose heart and mind. Are tuned. Like David's. Just wanting. To do God's will. Just wanting. To build God. A temple. Or a house of seeder.

And the third thing. Is it provides us. With great assurance. Does it not? That all we do. For Jesus. Has value. And will last. Forever.

[31 : 29] Psalm 138. Verse 8. The last verse. He says. The Lord will fulfill. His purpose to me. Your love. Oh Lord. Endures forever.

Do not abandon. The work. Of your hands. We are resting. In the name. With the authority. Of the word. As our protection. It gives us. Great assurance.

God will fulfill. His purposes. For us. He will fulfill. His purposes. For you. And for me. And we're here. On this earth. To do something. For God. That's what we're here for.

We're not here. To please. Ourselves. But in doing. Something for God. We are given. These. Wonderful. Wonderful. Blessings. We are protected. By the name. We have great.

Encouragement. Through the name. And we have great. Assurance. In the name. Because he is the king. Of kings. And he is the lord of laws.

[32 : 27] And blessed be his name. Amen. Amen. Amen.