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The End of Prayer is Praise; Psalm 18  
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Introduction - I see 7 movements, 7 theme blocks in Psalm 18. This is David's testimony of God's salvation and of God's Son, our Savior.

Psalm 18 is also found in 2 Samuel 22. In fact, the heading of Psalm 18 is actually v1 of 2 Samuel 22. 2 Sam 22 is its historical setting. Placed after Psalm 17 is its thematic setting. And there's a great lesson for us in both.

2 Samuel 22 is near the final days of David's life. David has been a man of war. From the time that he killed Goliath throughout his life, he fought battle after battle. David's vigilance and victories over a lifetime of war won for Israel an unprecedented era of peace that his son Solomon would enjoy. And so when the wars were finally over, after a lifetime of fighting the Lord's battles, David looks back on his life in 2 Sam 22, and he sings this song of praise to the Lord. If we were studying through 2 Sam, I would have titled the message, The End of Life is Praise. That would be a fitting title for us as well. As believers, our lives are headed for praise. The last song to be sung for the believer is a song of praise unto God for His great mercy, faithfulness, and salvation. It is the song that will arise from our hearts as this life comes to an end, and we enter into our eternal home.

Then we have this psalm here coming right after Psalm 17, which is David's prayer for temporary and eternal deliverance. Psalm 18 is the answer to Psalm 17. The end of prayer is praise. The prayer of David ended in praise to God and our prayers as believers end in praise to God as well. Praise arises from our hearts when God miraculously and graciously delivers and answers. And praises ring from our hearts even when our prayers are not answered in the way in which we envisioned. The 7 themes, these 7 movements, serve then as a pattern for us, a biblical, God-centered template, of how to rightly view our relation to God in the arena of prayer and of life.

I. The Struggle Has Yielded a Sweetness (vv1-3)

A) It is a sweetness that the depths and richness would have not been known apart from the struggle.

- B) It is not accidental or haphazard or inconsequential in the least bit that the very first words from David to God are “I love you, O Lord.” This may be the greatest lesson we learn from Psalm 18, the greatest life lesson of all. One of God’s purposes in our struggles is the deepening of our affections toward Him. Struggle purifies the heart, intensifies the faith, raises the affections to new heights. The harder the struggle, the sweeter, the closer, the stronger the bond of communion with our Lord grows. So much so that when we realize how dear and precious and lovely is our Savior, we then joy in the very same struggle that once caused so much pain and grief. That’s why Paul says in Rom 5, we rejoice in our sufferings - not because we love to suffer, but because of what the suffering produces - and one thing it produces is a new depth of communion with Christ.
- C) There is also the sweetness of growing in our understanding of the greatness and goodness of God. That’s what all these descriptive words indicate that pours forth from David’s heart and pen. “my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, in whom I take refuge, my shield, horn of my salvation, my stronghold.” David knows now more than ever just how true those descriptions of God are because he has lived through the struggle to see them be true. He knows now, more than ever, who God is, and who God is to him. And it is sweet. Spurgeon said just of the one descriptive, “my God,” “this is all good things in one. There is a boundless wealth in this expression; it means, my perpetual, unchanging, infinite, eternal good. He who can say truly “my God.” may well add, “my heaven, my all.”
- D) There is the sweetness of growing in our understanding of God’s faithfulness and the certainty of our salvation in Him. Every temporal deliverance is a foretaste, a guarantee, an assurance of our eternal deliverance. For the last enemy to be defeated is death, and the believer will awaken in heavenly bliss to proclaim, “I called upon the Lord, and I am saved!”

## II. Reflecting on the Trial (vv4-6)

- A) In reflecting on the trial David remembers the life-threatening, faith-assaulting intensity. He recalls the anguish, the agony, the cause of fear and doubt. This was not a bump in the road, an unfortunate change of plans, and interruption of routine schedule. This was life on line. David calls it distress. He was uprooted. He was undone.

- B) All he could do was cry to God, but God heard. God heard. David couldn't help but praise God. The languishing, desperate, dying cry of earth reached the throne of heaven.
- C) V6 is essentially a restatement of v3 except that in v3 David is praising God for answering his prayer. In v6 David is praising God for hearing his prayer, for the answer comes because the prayer was heard.
- D) What marvelous wonder it is, what supernatural work it is, that when God's people cry out to Him in prayer, He hears. We are not left as the Muslim who hopes his god will hear, we are not left as the Hindu who has to take care of his god so that he will hear, we are not left to chants, ceremonies, and incantations to hopefully gain a hearing from our God. Because Christ is our High Priest, and through His death and has removed every obstacle, every sin, that stood between us our God, we cry and He hears!
- E) Prayer is an absolute, miraculous, supernatural encounter and relation with the Almighty, our heavenly Father.

### III. Remembering the Lord's Answer (vv7-15)

- A) David use of language here is both figurative and literal. His purpose is to drive home the power of God, the majesty, the might of God. God is sovereign over His creation to fulfill His purposes. That God, when He comes, when He delivers His people, when He defeats His enemies, He leaves no doubt as to who won the battle!
- B) David knows his victories are not his victories, they are God's. God moved in surprising ways, unexpected ways, God moves in mysterious ways. God moves heaven and earth. No one can stop God. Once God's righteous fury has been aroused, none can quench it.
- C) From the viewpoint of David's enemies, the most unexpected thing happened as their victory was in sight, God came on the scene and won the battle.
- D) Well that's exactly what transpired in our case. When all was lost, when all was hopeless, when there was nothing that we could do, God came on the scene in Jesus Christ and won the battle for our souls.

### IV. Rejoicing in the Lord's Deliverance (vv16-19)

- A) David looks back on God's deliverance and fully acknowledges, fully confesses, it wasn't me, it was Him! I should have been defeated, but the Lord was my support; He rescued me.

### V. Rewarding the Righteous (vv20-30)

- A) God's word proves true! The prayer of Psalm 17:7 is answered in Psalm 18:30. David's petition "Wondrously show your steadfast love" was grounded in a grand promise "O Savior of those who seek refuge...at your right hand. And now comes times for praise because God's word has been proven true - "He is a shield for all those who take refuge in Him."
- B) God loves to honor those who honor Him. God loves to prove Himself true to His Word. God loves to keep His promises. God loves to wondrously show His steadfast love. And His people love to praise Him for it.

#### VI. Giving God the Glory (vv31-45)

- A) David's greatness, skill, victories, accomplishments, readiness, undeniable defeat of his enemies, his rise to power, his crown, his fame, and his renown - right here, he lays it all down before the Lord and gives God the glory for every single bit of it.
- B) David knew enough about himself to know that He couldn't have done any of this on his own, and he knows enough about God to know that every good and perfect gift comes from above.
- C) Oh my friends, let us not misplace the glory. From where does our intellectual achievements come, our families, our provision, our enjoyments, from where does everything we have and everything we have accomplished come? Every good thing comes from Him, from grace. We cannot lay claim to a single one. He gets the glory, we get the joy!

#### VII. The End is Praise to God (vv46-50)

- A) "blessed be my rock" that's different than "The Lord is my rock"
- B) Think about it this way. What if we were to ask David, "David if you had your life to live over, would you have rather skipped vv4-5?" And I think David would say, "If I had it all to do over again, I wouldn't change a thing. Because the events of vv4-5 led to my song in v49 - I will sing to Your name!" The End is Praise to God.
- C) v50 hints at Christ, the anointed one, who will reign forever. We could conclude the sermon this way: the end is praise because the end is Christ!