

“Bold Confidence”
Psalm 138
(Preached at Trinity, November 3, 2013)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. One of the great problems for the Christian is fear and doubt. Our lives are filled with many trials. God has ordained each one as a measure of His love and care for us as His children. He has ordained our trials to mature us as His people, sometimes to increase our faith and confidence in His promises, sometimes as chastisement, but never without purpose.
1 Peter 1:6-9 KJV - "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: ⁷ That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: ⁸ Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: ⁹ Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls"
2. As we mature our fears and doubts become swallowed up in the love of Christ.
1 John 4:18 NAS - "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love."
Proverbs 28:1 KJV - "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion."
 - a. This speaks of needless fear. A state of worry even when the object of the worry doesn’t exist. Notice Proverbs refers to it as wicked.
 - b. Faith brings confidence and boldness.
3. Such is the condition of David in this psalm. It is full of boldness and confidence. Every verse contains statements of absolute confidence.
Psalm 138:1 KJV - "I will praise thee with my whole heart"
Psalm 138:2 KJV - " I will worship toward thy holy temple"
Psalm 138:3 KJV - "In the day when I cried thou answeredst me"
Psalm 138:4 KJV - "All the kings of the earth shall praise thee"
Psalm 138:5 KJV - "Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD"
Psalm 138:6 - "Though the LORD *be* high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly"
Psalm 138:7 KJV - "thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me."
Psalm 138:8 KJV - "The LORD will perfect *that which* concerneth me"
4. As I stated earlier, Psalms 136-150 are almost entirely psalms of praise. In addition, Psalm 138 begins a series of 8 psalms of David. As with most of David’s psalms we sense the presence of his enemies and of his great gratitude for God’s sustaining power and grace.
5. As we look at this wonderful Davidic psalm we’ll divide it into three parts.
 - I. David’s personal exaltation – **Verses 1-3**

- II. David maintained the big picture. He had the expectation that God's praise would fill the earth – **Verses 4-5**
 - III. David humbled himself in confidence of God's unending care – **Verses 6-8**
- I. David's personal exaltation – **Verses 1-3**
- A. There is a declaration of confident praise
 - 1. David's life was full of turmoil
 - a. He spent years fleeing from King Saul.
 - b. He had to flee from the presence of his own son who wrenched the kingdom from him.
 - c. He was continually at war
 - 2. In the midst of these upheavals one thing remained consistent in David's life.
Psalm 138:1 KJV - "I will praise thee with my whole heart"
Psalm 138:2 KJV - "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name"
 - 3. This life is full of trials but one thing must remain consistent – we remain devoted to God. One of our great trials is the non-ending draw of this world. Many have been drawn aside.
1 Timothy 6:9-10 KJV - "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰ For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."
 - B. David declared four things that continually filled his heart with praise
 - 1. The overwhelming greatness of God filled David's heart with praise
 - a. While the world was filled with idolatry David's dedication to God remained unchanged
Psalm 138:1 - "before the gods will I sing praise unto thee."
 - b. The false gods of this world were powerless
Psalm 135:15-17 KJV - "The idols of the heathen *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands. ¹⁶ They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; ¹⁷ They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there *any* breath in their mouths."
 - c. God, on the other hand, was infinitely great
 David's life was consumed with God
 - 2. God's covenant love drew David to praise
Psalm 138:2 KJV - "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness" - רַחֲמֶיךָ
 - a. David knew God was his God
 - b. He knew he had God's favor; that God was working on his behalf
Psalm 17:7-8 KJV - " Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust *in thee* from those that rise up *against them*. ⁸ Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings"

- c. Most people will never know of this covenant love. They know only of the general love God has for all men.
God's general love isn't the same thing as His covenant love for the elect. There are millions of people racing towards hell that God loves in this general sense.
But they will never know the infinite love God pours out upon His beloved – covenant love.
 - d. God has a particular covenant love for His elect people
He knows us by name, calls us by name – we are His particular people. He set His heart upon us in eternity – it was an unmerited love. There is nothing in us that would merit such love.
It was love that brought God to send His Son to rescue us from sin that we might be reconciled to Himself
 - e. This infinite love has always filled the hearts of God's people with praise.
3. God's unchanging truth filled David with praise
Psalm 138:2 KJV - "and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."
- a. God's truth is absolute and unchanging. We can rest upon it.
God is called the God of truth
Psalm 31:5 KJV - "Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth."
 - b. God's Word is a declaration of God's truth
This is the very place of Satan's attack in the garden – "Hath God said?" It continues to be his place of attack today.
 - c. We can rejoice in His Word. It fills our hearts with praise. It is unchanging and absolute.
Psalm 56:10-11 KJV - " In God will I praise *his* word: in the LORD will I praise *his* word. ¹¹ In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me."
4. God's great care for David continually drew his heart to praise
Psalm 138:3 KJV - "In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, *and* strengthenedst me *with* strength in my soul."
- a. When David's life was filled with trials he cried out to God and God always heard him.
"When I cried You answered."
 - b. Some of the greatest expressions of confidence came from the lips of David.
2 Samuel 22:2-4 KJV - "The LORD *is* my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; ³ The God of my rock; in him will I trust: *he is* my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence. ⁴ I will call on the LORD, *who is* worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies."

II. David saw the big picture. He had an expectation that God's praise would fill the earth –
Verses 4-5

Psalms 138:4 KJV - "All the kings of the earth shall praise thee"

- A. David lived in a day when none of the kings of the earth praised God
1. The kings of the Philistines did not praise God – their god was Dagon
 2. Even Saul failed to give God the praise due to his name
 3. In fact, all the kings of the earth rise up in rebellion against God
Psalms 2:1-3 KJV - "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*, ³ Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."
 4. The same is still true today. How can it be said that the kings of the earth shall sing of the ways of God – **Verse 5**.
- B. It takes great confidence to see the big picture
1. Although David failed to see its fulfillment Solomon enjoyed a partial fulfillment.
2 Chronicles 9:23 KJV - "And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart."
 2. But there would come One much greater than Solomon.
 - a. God promised David that his kingdom would never end.
 - b. Through Christ this promise finds its fulfillment.
 3. Jesus Christ is reigning with absolute power and dominion
 - a. It would seem that the rulers of this world are beyond control. It would appear that they are without restraint
 - b. But the truth is quite different
Psalms 2:4-5 KJV - "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. ⁵ Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."
 4. In this world of evil it takes great confidence to see the end. All the kings of the earth shall bow before the throne of Christ
Philippians 2:9-11 KJV - "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; ¹¹ And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
- C. This should have great implications for our evangelism
1. It doesn't matter how things may seem. God is saving His own. All the nations of the world are coming under the reign of Christ. God is saving people from every kindred, tribe, and tongue.

2. This is the essence of Revelation 20:
Revelation 20:1-3 KJV - "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ² And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, ³ And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."
3. God's Word will prevail. We can bring it forth with confidence. Our King reigns
Psalm 138:4 KJV - "All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth."
2 Corinthians 4:6 KJV - " For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

III. David humbled himself in confidence of God's unending care – **Verses 6-8**

- A. God gives great care to the humble
Psalm 138:6 KJV - "Though the LORD *be* high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off."
 1. This has always been the case
 - a. God has always humbled those that He used
Moses:
Exodus 3:11 NAU - "But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?"
Numbers 12:3 KJV - "Now the man Moses *was* very meek, above all the men which *were* upon the face of the earth."
Gideon:
Judges 6:15 NAU - "O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold, my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father's house."
 b. God turns away from the proud – "but the proud . . . "
1 Peter 5:5-6 KJV - "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. ⁶ Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:"
 2. God's people are those who have humbled themselves before Him. It is the fruit of the Spirit who indwells us and fills us with His transforming grace.
 3. God blesses His humble people with His gracious care.
Psalm 138:7 KJV - "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me."
 Spurgeon: "He views them with pleasure, thinks of them with care, listens to their prayers, and protects them from evil. Because they think little of themselves he thinks much of them. They reverence him, and he respects them. They are low in their own esteem, and he makes them high in his esteem" (*Treasury of David*).

- B. God's people rest with confidence in His unending, eternal care
Psalm 138:8 KJV - "The LORD will perfect *that which* concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, *endureth* for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands."
1. God will perfect that which He has started
Philippians 1:6 KJV - "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:"
 2. David again speaks in praise of God's covenant love – it endures forever
 God will NOT forsake the works of His hands.

Conclusion:

1. May God grant us to walk through this world with the confidence of David. He will always care for us. He will never forsake us.
 This doesn't mean that David never suffered or that he never had doubts. There were times that David feared that he was at the point of death.
1 Samuel 20:3 KJV - "truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, *there is* but a step between me and death."
2. But David always found God to be sufficient. And the praise of God was always upon his lips. Derek Kidner – "To David, hard-pressed and threatened, the words come new-minted: God's *steadfast love... endures forever*" (Tyndale Old Testament Commentary, pp 499-500).
3. David boldly announced:
Psalm 138:7 KJV - "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me."
4. It was also David who wrote:
Psalm 23:4 KJV - "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."
5. May God grant such confidence to us. May He remove all doubt and all fear and replace it with bold confidence.
Psalm 138:1-2 KJV - "I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee. ² I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name"