

# The Promise

By Jeff Noblit

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## **Anchored in Truth Ministries**

1915 Avalon Ave.

Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

**Website:** [www.anchoredintruth.org](http://www.anchoredintruth.org)

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Let's go to Psalm 138. Tonight I am still looking back through the book of Psalms and still glorying in the wonders and the truths of God's word and that song we just sang goes wonderfully with this Psalm that we're going to look at together.

Psalm 138. The Psalmist here is praising and thanking God for God's favor and, of course, God's favor is always unmerited favor. This is certainly a parallel truth as David would look for the temporal favors, David would look at the favor of God in blessing his lineage with the coming Messiah, Christ would be born of the line of David. David would also in faith be looking forward to the spiritual redemption, the forgiveness of sins, through that very Messiah. So there's wondrous application for David in an historical time setting but wonderful typology here because this points to the favor God gives us through Jesus Christ. Psalm 138, he said,

1 I will give You thanks with all my heart; I will sing praises to You before the gods. 2 I will bow down toward Your holy temple And give thanks to Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word according to all Your name. 3 On the day I called, You answered me; You made me bold with strength in my soul. 4 All the kings of the earth will give thanks to You, O LORD, When they have heard the words of Your mouth. 5 And they will sing of the ways of the LORD, For great is the glory of the LORD. 6 For though the LORD is exalted, Yet He regards the lowly, But the haughty He knows from afar. 7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; You will stretch forth Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, And Your right hand will save me. 8 The LORD will accomplish what concerns me [what a promise]; Your lovingkindness, O LORD, is everlasting; Do not forsake the works of Your hands.

So I just entitled this "The Promise" because this thing over and over is filled with the reassurance of God's covenant promise to David and, in parallel, God's covenant promise to all of those who are his through his Son Jesus Christ. Isn't it interesting that as David and I think one of the aspects of David's thinking is, he is rejoicing that he is in the lineage of the Savior, the Messiah. But isn't it also true we are the sons of the Messiah through the new birth? He's our elder brother, the Scripture says. So as David was

literally physically in the line of the Savior, we by new birth become in the line of the Savior so there are these wonderful parallels and powerful typologies of our salvation in Christ in a picture of the faithful promise of favor. You've got to latch onto that. You need to just think on that sometimes: my Savior has promised favor to me. Unmerited favor because there can be no other for sinners like us but my Savior has promised favor toward me. A wonderful, wonderful thing.

So this promise David is meditating on, multifaceted but culminates in Christ and the promise that we have of favor in Christ. This culminates, I. In a praise. There is a praise that is evoked, if you will, by this promise. In verse 1 he says, "I will give You thanks with all my heart." Someone said we need a broken heart to mourn our sins but we need our whole heart to praise the Lord's perfections. The psalmist here is contemplating the glories of God's wisdom and power in saving us which, by the way, is infinite. It is beyond comprehension. I've told you this a million times but for all eternity we'll have perfect minds to continually be learning the wisdom and beauty and power of God and how he saved us and after a million years with perfect minds, we'll still not have it all taken in and it will just be more interesting, more enthralling, more thrilling and bring more pleasure every moment of heaven as we learn more and more. Well David, like you and I, is on this pilgrimage on the earth to partially begin learning the glories of God's favor toward us in grace through the promised Messiah, the Son Jesus Christ, and he says, "It just takes my whole heart. It just consumes my whole heart. It's just that big and it's just that wonderful."

Now, it is true that as we walk this sinful sod and we get cold and indifferent toward our Lord, sometimes we ought to throw ourselves as an act of the will into praise but, thank God, that doesn't happen all the time. Is it not true that I guess it's more true than ever before in the history of mankind that we have more garbage, worldly stuff to come flooding into our senses: our ears, our eyes, our minds, our emotions, television, radios. I don't know if people listen to radio's anymore. Internet, media, social media, good night, the nonsense. So you come into church on Sunday morning and a lot of us have not prepared ourselves and you're just cold. You're just cold. Some of you are cold right now because you did nothing this afternoon to prepare yourself for the word. But the word is open, Brother Tom leads us in a song and all of a sudden though you chose to praise the Lord, it just kind of kindles and catches a little flame and you begin to realize what David is saying as he contemplated the great glories of the promise of God's favor. He said, "It takes my whole heart. It just takes my whole heart."

Someone said the capital crime of the Lord's people is barrenness of praise. One line of praise is worth a whole list of prayer requests. One hour of praise is worth a whole day of prayer and fasting. And I heard this years ago and you've heard me repeat it and it's one of those little simple phrases but it has profound therapy in it if you'll do it: when you can't pray your way through something, you praise your way through it. Have you ever been to the place, maybe even pacing the floor? I've been there. I just couldn't pray but I could praise. Just raised my hands and started, "Praise you God. I don't understand it. I don't get it. I'm heartbroken. I'm bewildered. I'm discouraged but praise your name for it anyway." You do that for about 5 minutes and watch your spirits lift. Sometimes we do

have to just throw ourselves into it but, thank God, it's not all the time and, thank God, when we do there is a kindling anew and we get a touch, at least, of what David is saying here, "I have to praise you with my whole heart. Your perfections are just that big and that glorious."

So David was likely reflecting on some seasons of trouble. We know down in verse 3 he says, "On the day I called, You answered me; You made me bold with strength," so it's highly likely he's referring back to one of his troubled seasons but nevertheless, there is a great truth for all of us here. Secondly, he says here in verse 1, "I want to praise you with my whole heart." He said, "I'm going to do it before all the gods." Now, David lived in a day when there were lots of false idols and false altars and false gods being worshiped and David said, "I don't care, I am unashamed. I want to be open and unapologetically praise you and show my devotion to you in front of all these idolaters and all these idols that the people are worshiping."

Let me ask you: are you ashamed of Jesus? Now look, there's a right way and a wrong way. Don't be obnoxious and forceful in your witness for Christ but when I was in that food mart in Decatur, Alabama and I saw that shrine to those 2 little fat Buddhas, I could not help but tell that lady, "My God sits in the heavens." And there was something in me that just wanted me to go over there and dropkick those 2 little fat guys through the front window. I mean, the Satanic paralysis. Folks, you can go to India and in that country alone hundreds of millions of people, that's all they have is a little statue. They don't have any money but they will bring what money they have and they burn it before those little statues. What blackness and darkness. No wonder David says, "When I found the truth and I see what everybody else is clamoring after and I see the darkened superstitions that's controlling people's heart I just want to praise you, God, for my salvation with all my heart."

Look at this Islamic wickedness we see all over the world today and young people, now folks, listen: a lot of these folks have earned doctorates. This isn't a matter of intelligence, it's a matter of a fallen, dark heart. I mean, we've got just unabashed wickedness run amok and it ought to make us praise God that he has let us get in on the truth. You know, we ought to be like that beautiful young maiden who's newly engaged to her sweetheart and she openly and genuinely expresses her praise and devotion and her love for her sweetheart even and especially, you might say, in the presence of other available and envious young men. I mean, she's the kind that when others would like to take her fiancé's place, she will praise her beloved. That's what David's saying, "These other lovers, these other idols would love for me to clamor after them but right in the face of all of them, I'm praising my God and the great favor he has shown me through the promise of his Son in the coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ." While others in this world lash themselves in devotion to money or power or popularity and my, my, my, we live in a culture that has given itself over and God, by the way, has to be behind that because he's sovereign, been given over to the power of lust and sensuality. Aren't you glad that we can enjoy that gift God has given us but not worship it as our God? Get the balance. Get the balance. There is nothing wrong with sexual passions, God has just given a proper way and a proper place for us to enjoy that to his glory and not the way our world wants

us to worship. You don't worship sensuality and sexuality, you worship the God who gave it to you and that's what our world has gotten all out of whack today. But we praise our God, we do not praise these things.

Secondly, he talks about in verse 2, "I'm going to praise you, or rather bow down toward Your holy temple." I think that is a powerful statement of Christ since everything in the temple points to Christ. Everything about the way God precisely designed Solomon to build the temple was so that it would reflect Jesus Christ. From the brazen laver out front of washings all the way into the Holy of Holies that the high priest only entered once a year, every part of it pointed to Christ. So David when he says, "I am bowing to the holy temple," yes, the Jews of antiquity did worship God in a geographical sense but those who had faith saw beyond the geography and the physical type, they saw the great glory of the promised Savior in the geography and the type of the temple. So this is him talking about his glorying in Christ.

Now, a couple of thoughts here. First of all, the promise we have of God's favor in Jesus is true because of his lovingkindness. We see it there in verse 2, "I will bow down toward Your holy temple And give thanks to Your name for Your lovingkindness." Another word for lovingkindness is grace. "You have shown a lovingkindness, that is, a favor toward us that in no way we merited or earned or could deserve. O God, I want to praise you for that."

You know, I don't want to be demeaning or crude toward anyone else but the denomination in our area that is so strong and they forbid any musical instruments, well friend, if you don't get grace, you ain't got much to praise about anyway. But when you get grace, I wish we had a 500 piece orchestra up here as long as they were godly and played for the glory of God. I mean, to me, I'm like David where in another place he says, "Praise the lord with resounding cymbals." He actually goes through the instruments of the orchestra and says, "Let's praise him," because the favor of his lovingkindness, his grace is just that wonderful.

Now, we've got to stay in the word of God and we've got to dissect and lay out these truths line by line, precept by precept and unfold the glories that are in the word of God so that we do have an intellectual understanding of the greatness of God's wisdom, power and beauty that we want to praise him for but it all centers in and is founded in this unmerited favor. Here it's the word lovingkindness but it's the word grace.

2. Not only is he saying I'm bowing toward this holy temple which represents Jesus because it's a promise of grace, this promise is also anchored in truth. It's anchored in truth. Verse 2, "I will bow down toward Your holy temple And give thanks to Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth." Never, never, never has God's word proven untrue. God's word is truth. God's word is a reflection or rather an expression, if you will, of his very being and he is of absolute veracity. He cannot be anything but true and his word is truth. Now, the liberal critics of our day would like to tell us that, "Well, we can't really trust the word of God. We can't really know that it's God's word. Maybe it speaks to us correctly on some theological matters but the historical matters of the word of God,

well, that's up for debate. Those may not be literally true," and on and on they go. But liberal critics are like common flies, they can do no good and if you don't drive them away relentlessly, they will end up doing much harm. It's just amazing to me as a pastor how unrelenting the efforts to undermine our faith is. How subtle it is. How deceptive it is. How maniacal. Every week when I wake up there is a new twist out there. There is a new slant. A new novel thing that undermines simple, sound truth in the revealed teaching of an historical grammatical interpretation of the word of God.

So he says, "I am going to praise you for the truth of the word of God." You know, when God wills, he could make many more worlds but God cannot make any more truth. Did you understand that? He may not have revealed all the truth but he can't make any more truth because truth is settled in him. That's a powerful thought. That's why every jot and every tittle is important in the word of God and that's why Satan strives continually to bring in unsound doctrine into the church and into God's people's thinking.

Well, he talks about praising God according to his name. He says, the last part of verse 2, "For You have magnified Your word according to all Your name." Of course, the word "name" in a Jewish understanding represents the attributes of someone so he's talking about, "God, I want to praise you according to how you or what you have said about yourself." Now listen: your feelings about God are not necessarily always true. I don't care how strong you feel it. What God reveals about himself is what is true. So we use our minds and train our emotions to agree with what God has revealed about himself and that's what David means when he says, "I want to praise you according to your name, according to who you are and how you have revealed yourself to be."

Listen, God is never subjective, he's always objective. He's an objective standard. He's outside of us. Now, we live in this day of subjective relativism. I mean, our culture has decided we will no longer look to the objective principles and values of the Judeo-Christian tradition. We've decided we don't need the Old and New Testaments and their revealed teaching on moral absolutes and principles as what we will as a society agree on to govern ourselves. Now it's just going to be every single person, every little group, and whatever lust, desire, viewpoint, feelings they have, that's just as valid as anybody else's. It's just bizarre. I mean, the dominoes that are falling when a culture decides they are going to get into man-centered, subjective truth, your truth may be different than his truth and his truth is different than his truth, and we've got to accept everybody's truth because everybody is equally valid. That's not the way our forefathers set up this nation to run.

I do not believe, by the way, most of our founding fathers were individually Christians but they were all totally committed to the truth of Scripture as the foundation stone for a sane and good society. They were Christian in their consensus of how a country ought to run and they made it very clear that we've got to have those biblical principles as revealed in the word of God to make sure the people in this new Republic we have developed behave. So they had, I believe, a God, divine providence gave them a wisdom that sustained this country with the strength and the greatness we've had for all these years. But we're going to lose our greatness when we stop basing our laws and our culture on objective truth as revealed in the word of God. I mean, a truth outside of all of us that we

all are accountable to, not that your truth is this and your truth is that and your truth is different from that truth. That just leads to a chaotic disorder of every kind.

Well, David said, "No, I'm going to praise you according to your name." A few thoughts on God's name and as far as where David was and his understanding, David did not have the finished understanding of the revelation of Christ but he had it in seed form. But he didn't know many wonderful things about God. Elohim is a Hebrew word for God. It means Creator or Majestic One, the omnipotent one. Jehovah is the God of promise, the God of salvation, the God of covenant. Adonai, sovereign ruler, Lord. Then, of course, through Jesus Christ we all now can call him Father. So you can go on and on and on with the glories of who God is by just the names he has given himself. And it doesn't end there. There are many, many, many more attributes of God's wonder and glory that we begin to understand.

So the promise of God's favor toward us infinitely surpasses everything which David, at this point, had known about God. He's discovering these new things and it's wonderfully blowing his mind and that's why he's talking in such great terms of awesomeness and praise to God. You know, as you and I as Christians on this side of the cross and on this side of the completion of the canon of Scripture think about all the layers and layers and unfolding of the doctrines of the cross of the resurrection, of repentance, of adoption, of the new birth, of once for all justification, of glorification, of eternal security, perseverance of the saints. You can do multitudes of sermons on every one of those doctrines unfolding the glories of God's wisdom and accomplishing these. All of these things are components of God's favor toward us and they all speak of the nature of God because only he can have such a wonderful salvation and favor toward us.

No wonder the third commandment tells us, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord your God in vain." That doesn't mean, "Don't use God's name with a cuss word." Now, don't do that. It means, "Don't have a view of God contrary to how God has revealed himself." You are obligated to discipline yourself to understand who God is according to how he has revealed himself. You know, I've used a little illustration through the years of my wife, she is brown eyed and brown headed and she's about 5'5" and I say, "I love the fact that you're a blonde and you've got blue eyes and you're 6 feet tall." Do you know what? I probably won't get supper that night. I'll have to sleep somewhere else and I should because I need to praise her according to who she is, not according to what I'm thinking. By the way, I'm not thinking that, by the way. I married up and I'm glad I did. That's just an illustration.

But the point is: a person would be offended if you began to praise them contrary to who they are. Folks, God is the same way. There should be a disciplined lashing of our mind and emotions to, "What saith the Scriptures about who this God is?" And if you're not sure, then say, "I don't know. I ain't going to say anything about that area of God or that attribute of God until I find out what the book says because I'm going to agree with the book." There's a whole lot of sentimental nonsense coming out of pulpits that disturb people's human, base emotions that has nothing to do with the truth of who God is. They use these little silly illustrations about dogs and pets and all this kind of stuff, not that

they're all silly, but they kind of bring God down to a little human emotional level. You need to be very careful: describe God according to his name, his true attributes.

Well, David says, "This just evokes praise in me when I contemplate the glories of your favor toward me." Secondly, there is power in this promise of favor. Verse 3 says, "On the day I called, You answered me; You made me bold with strength in my soul." Isaiah 40:29 says, "He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power." So again, I think David was probably reflecting on a time of trouble. He called out to God and God in his faithfulness to him delivered him through and out of that trouble. You know, we do find this: when trouble drives you close to the Lord, then new boldness and strength comes. Have you noticed that? When a trial or difficulty drives you closer to the Lord, you get a new boldness in your testimony. There is a new strength in your faith and I think David is reflecting on that very thing.

God does promise us strength for the journey. Most of the time it seems like God gives us a strength of influence. Sometimes he lets Christians be the top guy but just think about it as we look back through the Old Testament saints like Moses. Moses was a great influencer of Pharaoh for those years. Joseph, he was a nobody. He didn't become a Pharaoh, he became a great influencer of Pharaoh. Esther, she didn't become king, she was Queen but she was a great influencer of the king. Daniel, again, he didn't become the principal figure in Babylon but he became a mighty advisor to the Babylonian king, even pagans. And we see this trend. This very often when God wants to do his best work, he gives you a position of influence and that's where a Christian's power often is. He'll put you in a factory. He'll put you in an office. He'll put you on a ball team. He'll put you somewhere where you just have an influence because of your character, the unique spirit you have because you're walking with Jesus Christ and it's a power that God gives us. Now David, of course, went on to be the king of Israel but we do know David had powerful influence even before he became the king because he was so blessed of God. Remember they would say, "Saul has killed his thousands, David has killed his tens of thousands." A great influencer even before he became king.

So he says, "When God has favored me, I find that he gives me the power and the strength I know for my difficulties and my trials." III. The prominence of this promise of favor. He says, verse 4, "All the kings of the earth will give thanks to You, O LORD, When they have heard the words of Your mouth." Now, this is a promise of such magnitude and such greatness that the leading men of the earth and what he's saying is, there's coming a day, I think this points directly to the millennial kingdom, when even all the kings and the rulers of the earth though they may not be individually believers. We know during the millennium a lot of unbelievers are born and prosper and many of them will, no doubt, come into leadership but nevertheless, Christ will rule on the earth and even with men's fallen understanding, his wisdom will be so astounding all men will be forced, they will be compelled to praise him. David says, "Those of us who are the objects of your unmerited favor, we're overflowing with our whole hearts to praise what you're doing but you're so wondrous, God, that even the kings of the earth who would probably like to sit on your throne if they could, nevertheless, they'll be overwhelmed with the greatness of your wisdom and beauty and power. They will even praise you."

Today kings get together to feud and fight and squabble and be contentious but in that day in the millennial kingdom with the wisdom of Christ ruling the earth, they will be compelled to sing Christ's praises. Romans 14:11 reminds us, "As I live, says, the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." Could it be that that's not only a phrase for the moment of the final judgment when all will bow either unto salvation or condemnation? Could it be that during the millennial kingdom that's true also? All men on the earth, not coerced, just the sheer presence and the magnitude of who Christ is compels men to praise him? Man, what a God we serve. Compelled to praise him.

Verse 6, "For though the LORD is exalted, Yet He regards the lowly, But the haughty He knows from afar." Though he is exalted, he stoops with special interest for the lowly, that is, the humble. The humble are those who have a proper perspective of themselves. A humble person is not that person that looks down on themselves, it's a person that understands how God sees us. God has a place in his heart for them but he says the haughty, he knows from afar. The haughty are those who are proud, who think highly of themselves and highly that means above the truth about themselves. You know, the truth of God works mightily through the lowly but not through the haughty. They are not willing to receive God's truth. They are consumed with their own truth. Think about Abel as he brought his sacrifice to God in the early days there in the garden of Eden and he came with a lowly sacrifice, a sacrificed animal as his offering, showing that, "I have nothing to bring. I have to bring the blood of a third party," which, of course, pointed to the sacrifice of Christ. Think about Moses after he spent the years in the wilderness there and God had humbled his heart and then God put a flame in a burning bush and speaks to Moses out of the burning bush and what does Moses say? He says, "I'm not qualified, God. I can't. I'm not good enough for this." A lowly heart and then God used him. Joseph humbled in the Egyptian prison and then God took that lowly spirit and exalted him. David, the runt of Jesse's household who took the lowly job of tending the sheep but none of the other strapping, fine, handsome brothers of David were chosen as king, the lowly David was chosen as God's king of Israel. And on and on and on. The Lord Jesus Christ, born of a nobody virgin from a nowhere place and whose father humanly speaking was not by physical conception but by adoption, Joseph who was not a man of esteem or respect. A good man but nothing of nobility or esteem in the culture of the day, a lowly position but he's King of kings and Lord of lords.

God just has a way of doing that. You see, God's not impressed with the supposed greatness of men. I mean, should the ocean be impressed with a drop of water? Should Mount Everest be impressed with an anthill? Should the sun be impressed by a birthday candle? God is not impressed with men. Aren't you glad he has favor toward the lowly? You see, God didn't send his Son to die for you because you impressed him. God sends his Son to die for you because he's impressed with himself. God says, "I have the kind of grace and love mankind cannot comprehend. I will come and save those who are most brazenly and completely unworthy of my consideration." God's saving of us lowly ones is an expression of God's greatness and love and mercy. We are unworthy subjects.



Any man impressed with himself does not know God. How could man know God's infinite greatness if he's full of himself but not full of praises to God? The Bible says we're filthy rags. The Bible says we're desperately wicked. But God has said here he's close to the lowly. Someone said the man impressed with himself is full of baloney and he has little appreciation for prime rib. The man impressed with himself is so full of himself he cannot bring himself to praise God. David though, has come to see what he is and he's come to see the greatness of God's favor toward him and he's overflowing with his praise.

One last word about verse 6, "But the haughty He knows from afar." Notice first of all: he knows him. He knows him well. He knows him intimately. He knows his details. He knows the thoughts, the motives, the words, the actions, all the deeds of every haughty or proud man. He knows who you are. He knows what you're doing. He knows why you are doing it. He knows the proud or haughty man from afar. He knows him well in this life and he will one day shut him up in hell forever. He knows him afar in the sense that he doesn't know him and bringing him into his blessings and bringing that man into his favors.

Well, IV. The protection of the promise. God has this unmerited favor, this promise to his children and it has a wonderful protection in it. Notice first 7, "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; You will stretch forth Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, And Your right hand will save me." Now, first of all, he says though I walk in the midst of trouble. He didn't say if I walk in the midst of trouble. He said it's going to happen, trouble, as a matter of fact in the Christian life. But child of God, listen: every person born and living on this earth of any length of time faces trouble and faces trials and faces hardships. We just get to face them for God's glory and our good and get rewards in heaven forever for them. You're either going to suffer on this earth for unrighteousness and get nothing for it either in this life or in the one to come or you will walk for Christ in this life, know some troubles because of that but get God's blessing and strength in the trouble, great victories in the journey down here, by the way. Amen? Some great victories come and then rewards forever. I mean, it's a win, win, win for us. "Though I walk in trouble," he says, "You will revive me." You know, the New Testament doesn't say if you encounter various trials, it says but brethren when you encounter various trials. God's promised protection is there when we need it.

First of all, he says, "You will revive me," in verse 7. How many times have we needed reviving? Some of you need reviving right now. Some of you look like you could use a little life support. I know I do too sometimes. I'm promised forgiveness, I'm promised grace and, oh how I need it. Sometimes God revives me. When have you been downcast in your soul because you have dishonored the Lord? You haven't honored him in your attitude. You haven't honored him in your heart. You haven't honored him in maybe some behavior and you're downcast in your soul and all of a sudden by the word of God and the Spirit of God, he floods you with the truth, "Child, you don't understand something, I have chosen to favor you," and he crushes you with joy in the unmerited favor and forgiveness he gives all of us and we walk in that praise and that gratitude because of that.

David also said, "You are also going to protect me even from my enemies." We're going to have enemies. Now, David was a warring king. He knew what it meant to have enemies but he made sure that his enemies were God's enemies. You've got to make sure you're letting God pick your friends and pick your enemies. Make sure God is picking your friends and picking your enemies. You're going to have some enemies. Don't go out and try to get some, you just live for Jesus and you'll get some. Why are you going to have enemies in this life? Because God does. If people hate God why should they love you? I get a little bit amused at some of these folks that think, "Well, if you're just winsome and kind and sweet enough you can get all these people to love you." Now look: you ought to be winsome and kind and self-denying and even call some of those who hate God to love you but ultimately if they hate God, some of them are going to hate you. You're going to have some enemies but you can know this: my God has promised to protect me and even what they do against me, they may mean it for evil but God is going to mean it for good. That's a part of his protection that he gives us.

Verse 7, he talks about God's right hand, last phrase, "Your right hand will save me." I just can't help but believe that's another expression pointing straight to the Lord Jesus Christ. He sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He is God's right hand because the right hand was the metaphor for power and authority and accomplishment. Jesus Christ is God the Father's power, authority and accomplishment in favoring us.

Now, lastly and quickly, the perseverance of this promise. The perseverance. Is this a temporal promise? Well, I think there was an application to David and his kingdom as far as a geographical place and a place in time and space history. Yes, that part was temporary but you look at this and you think, "Well, wait a minute, there's more truth than just a temporal earthly principle here." Verse 8, "The LORD will accomplish what concerns me; Your lovingkindness," that's the favor, the unmerited favor you've cast toward me in Christ, "Your lovingkindness, O LORD, is everlasting; Do not forsake the works of Your hands." In other words, you are going to make it. You say, "But Pastor, I'm weak. Just to be honest, Pastor, I'm lazy. Just to be honest, at times I'm just out and out sinful." Yeah, but I've got news for you: God's choice to favor you in grace is everlasting. Get over your failure. When you sin, don't look at your failure, look at your faithful Savior. That will do more to get you right with God than you trying to beat yourself up and get yourself whipped back into shape. Yes, sure, there's a mourning and there's a repentance of sin but it should be a mourning and repentance with your heart focused on the everlasting, unfailing favor God has shown you in Christ Jesus. It can't fail because Christ can't fail. It can't stop because he won't stop. It can't be diminished because he is infinite. There is no diminishing his grace and favor toward you. You are so favored by God I can't even express it. It just takes my whole heart to praise him for it. You think, "Well, I must be special." No, God is special. You're just a vile wretch that he wanted to show how much he could love. You're just proof of the bigness of God's love. Unmerited favor.

You see, the first and most difficult step in your favor has already been taken and Christ took that for you. You've been changed from an enemy of God into sons and had one

spark of love for God kindled in your heart. Look, if one tiny spark of love and honor for God is kindled in your heart, that's a mightier change than all that remains to be done in you to make you perfect in Christ. Did you hear that? If you understand your fallen depravity and for God to do that miraculous work of regenerating your heart and just put one little seed of God-honoring in there, the huge amount of the work has already been done. The rest of the journey is very little compared to what's already started. Are you with me? Y'all are looking at me like a calf at a new gate a little bit. Do you understand what I'm saying? It's almost like if you have a pitch black room and you've got one of those flashlights you slowly screw it up and it gets brighter and brighter. It's kind of like the first little burst of light is the biggest thing, the rest of it is just more illumination. Well, that's what's happening. The first moment God worked in your heart in genuine saving faith was there and you became a new creature in Christ Jesus. You're dumb, you're ignorant, you don't know much, you have faith the size of a grain of mustard seed and you're just barely understanding the glories and the wonders. I mean, just barely. I can't tell you how much stuff I had wrong when I was saved. You get saved, you love Jesus and you come up with all these conclusions and they're all wrong because you haven't been in the book yet. Amen?

But yet the monumental cataclysmic gap that was filled to get one genuine spark of God-honoring faith in your heart was the biggest step that's ever going to be taken in your ultimate glorification. Are you with me? Here's why you can't lose your salvation, here's why God's favor toward you is everlasting: God has made a huge down payment. He's not going to lose his work. He's already made a huge down payment. He sent his Son to die for you on the cross. Listen, Jesus didn't go die on the cross in some sloppy, undisciplined way. He died on the cross to perfectly bring about the redemption of his elect children. He's not going to lose a tiny drop of the efficacious work of his precious blood. Every soul Jesus died for is going to be saved, is going to be secure, is going to be kept, is going to last forever. David said it way back there in the Psalms, "Your lovingkindness is everlasting. You began this good work and you're going to perform it until the day of Christ Jesus." A tiny, tiny spark of spiritual life is the biggest most magnanimous change that's ever going to happen, the rest of it is just developing it from there out.

Woo, it's good stuff. It's good stuff and David wrote it all hundreds of years before Jesus was born. How can you not love the word of God? You can't write that stuff. God had to write that.

Let's stand together.