

Psalm 21

Listen to this lesson taught at bit.ly/210616psa21 (or scan QR code)



To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

¹ The king shall have joy in Your strength, O LORD;
And in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!
² You have given him his heart's desire,
And have not withheld the request of his lips.

Selah
³ For You meet him with the blessings of goodness;
You set a crown of pure gold upon his head.
⁴ He asked life from You, and You gave it to him—
Length of days forever and ever.
⁵ His glory is great in Your salvation;
Honor and majesty You have placed upon him.
⁶ For You have made him most blessed forever;
You have made him exceedingly glad with Your presence.
⁷ For the king trusts in the LORD,
And through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved.

⁸ Your hand will find all Your enemies;
Your right hand will find those who hate You.
⁹ You shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of Your anger;
The LORD shall swallow them up in His wrath,
And the fire shall devour them.
¹⁰ Their offspring You shall destroy from the earth,
And their descendants from among the sons of men.
¹¹ For they intended evil against You;
They devised a plot which they are not able to perform.
¹² Therefore You will make them turn their back;
You will make ready Your arrows on Your string toward their faces.

¹³ Be exalted, O LORD, in Your own strength!
We will sing and praise Your power.

God's blessing in Christ—more than we can think or ask, v1–3a.

The King here is ultimately Christ. Just as with Psalm 16, there are things said here (e.g. v4b) that are ultimately only true of Christ. But Christ has come that His joy might be in us (v1a, cf. Jn 15:11). These things which are His as our King, are also ours by our federal interest (participation) in Him as our Head.

Notice that to pray like Jesus, it must come first from the heart (v2a) and then from the lips (v2b). But even beyond what we think or ask, the Lord meets (“intercepts/confronts,” v3a) us with goodness that we haven’t even asked for yet.

God's blessing in Christ—bound up in the glory and gladness of Christ, v3–7

Everything that can be good is ours in Christ, v3a (cf. James 1:17).

- Christ’s rule can never be undone, having been placed upon Him from above not below (v3b)
- Christ’s incarnation (v4a) and resurrection (v4b) secure for us all blessedness in Him
- Christ’s glory is a chief end of God’s saving us (v5, cf. Eph 1 and God’s glory in Christ), so our salvation is as sure as God’s commitment to Christ’s glory!
- Christ’s gladness is a chief end of God’s saving us (v6), which is why His joy (cf. Ps 16:11) is our chief joy (cf. Ps 73:25, 28).
- Christ’s faith (v7a) and God’s covenant love (v7b) are the mechanism and foundation of God’s saving us, neither of which can ever fail

God's blessing in Christ—requires the cursing of His enemies, v8–12

Love is not love, unless it destroys whatever hates its object. Every single enemy and hater of Christ must be found out (v8) and destroyed (v9–10).

Devouring fire is a dreadful creature, created with such a nature as to make it useful for a description of God’s wrath throughout Scripture (cf. Gen 19:28; Isa 66:24; Mark 9:48; 2Thess 1:8–9; Rev 9:2, etc.). What a marvel this is in the burnt offerings that pointed forward to Christ, and a caution against those who miss this in thinking what to do with the bodies of believers.

God is covenantal in His wrath (v10), which is why it is so necessary that there be a covenant grace into which to bring the sinner, and so dreadful to be put out of that covenant. He will leave neither root nor branch of His enemy, so it is necessary that we be grafted into Christ. No man is doing any good thing for his children and descendants unless he is first and foremost a friend of God.

Let those who intend evil (v11) beware. The God who intends good also sees their intentions. Theirs will fail (v11b–12a), but His will succeed—including His intention of their destruction (v12). But let the righteous rejoice that God not only does them good in all things but fully repays all who do evil. Christ is the great Example of this (cf. Ac 2:23–24; 4:23–31), but all evils done against us follow the same principles.

For the believer, not only is the joy of the Lord our strength, but the strength of the Lord is our joy (v13), so that we should always be praising it. We never find ourselves in a moment where we lack cause for praise or furnishing for obedience.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Psalms 20 and 21. Does relate in many in many ways too. Psalm 20. Psalm 20 being more of a crying out for that, which Psalm 21 is a giving of thanks. And there's a little bit of a mirror image this often happens in Hebrew poetry. Which leads to some to suggest and there's no other evidence for it necessarily that 20 and 21 were originally two halves of one longer poem, but often for those of you who.

Relished with much pleasure your poetry units in in your homeschool literature. Often there's a A B B. A format except for in Hebrew, it's often all the way into the center and then mirror it all the way out. So, ABCDED CBA or. Or something like that, but in this case the first half of Psalm 20 you have them praying for the king and then you have the focus on the king himself the second half is Psalm 20 the first half of Psalm 21 corresponds to the second half of Psalm 20 where you actually have the king speaking about himself and the third person giving thanks and praise to God and then the people are addressing the king in the second half of Psalm 21.

Affirming God the victory that God gives him over his enemies and then at the end of each of the Psalms you have a direct line of of praise coming up as we have here be exalted. Oh Yahweh and you're in strength. We will sing and praise your power.

Psalm 21. To the chief musician a psalm of David. The king shall have joy in your strength though. Yahweh. And in your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice? You have given him his heart's desire. And have not withheld the request of his lips. Say for you meet him with the blessings of goodness.

You set a crown of pure gold upon his head. He asked life from you and you gave it to him length of days forever and ever. His glory is great in your salvation. Honor and Majesty, you have placed upon him. For you have made him most blessed forever. He have made him exceedingly glad with your presence.

For the King trusts in Yahweh and through the mercy of the Most High. He shall not be moved. Your hand will find all your enemies. Your right hand will find those who hate you. You shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of your anger. Yahweh will swallow them up in his wrath.

And the fire shall devour them. The offspring you shall destroy it from the earth and they're descendants from among the sons of men. For they intended evil against you. That advised a plot which they are not able to perform therefore, you will make them turn their back. You will make ready your arrows on your string toward their faces.

Be exalted or Yahweh and your own strength. We will sing and praise your power.

So for the words of God. The first part of the psalm we have the God's blessing in Christ is more than we can think or ask and yes, I know that in the epistle it says more than we can ask or think but the order in verse 2 is think or ask and then verse 3 that you don't even get to ask sometimes and so that's the more part and then the second part of the psalm picking up in verse 3 with the blessings of goodness.

On through verse 7 that God's blessings to us in Christ are bound up in the glory of Christ and the gladness of Christ not only that it pleases Christ that we would be blessed but his pleasure in the Father is that with which we are blessed. And then in the third place verses 8 through 12 that God's blessings in Christ and God's blessing in Christ requires the cursing of his enemies to cursing of Christ's enemies.

And then in the last place not only is the joy of the Lord our strength. But the strength of the Lord is our joy. First then God's blessing in Christ is more than we can think or ask. He says the King shall have joy in your strength of Yahweh and it's a palm of David and so you think it's David until you get to lines like end of verse 4 length of days forever and ever the beginning of verse 6 made him most blessed forever, these are things that David is experiencing even now and that we look forward to experiencing with him, but there are things that David can only.

Have and we can only have because of Jesus. This is another one of those situations much like in Psalm 16 where it said, you will not allow your holy one to see corruption in the apostle on the day of Pentecost says you should watch for things in the Salter that are about the anointed or that are about the king that are beyond any mere man who was king and he says we've got David's grave and David's body here with us to this day on the day of Pentecost and so that could only be Christ.

And here too, yes, there is David enjoying these things by faith in the Christ to come to some extent but there are many things in this psalm that really only apply to the Lord Jesus and this psalm is especially then a psalm of Christ. The King shall have joy in your strength.

Oh Yahweh. Now as important to us we want to study what Jesus enjoys because in John 15, he says that he's spoken to us that his joy might be in us and that we might have it to the full or we might have it abundantly. One of the problems with our sinfulness is that we enjoy the wrong things so often.

And then we we even do such wicked things as judge God by whether or not we're having as much of the stuff that we enjoy and that of course leaves us open to the attacks of the devil the temptations of the devil who when he tempted our Lord as to whether he had enough of what he enjoyed Lord Jesus basically answered well actually.

I enjoy every word the prophet proceeds out of the mouth of God. And so, when you see in Scripture Jesus delighting in something enjoying something. As you want to play called pay close attention because we who trust in Jesus and have seen His love for us and who love him we won't him to be pleased but be we want ourselves to be pleased by whatever pleases him.

We want to have his joy. It's so much better than anything we could enjoy. I'm not a connoisseur of much. I'm not fancy enough for that but you can think of the illustration, you know someone who really knows their I don't know. Think of something that I'm not likely to enjoy escargot snails and thank you they know exactly and if I had I'm sure as refined a pallet as they I would learn how to enjoy a snail and what makes one snail better than another one.

Well, I'm not particularly interested in having my palate accommodated to snails. But I'm very interested in having the palate of my soul accommodated to whatever exquisite delicacies of the pleasure of God the Lord Jesus enjoys and I have and you have if you believe in Him the promise of Scripture that the Holy Spirit is about the business of conforming your mind and heart to Christ's.

So that you will enjoy what he enjoys. So that's the theme of the whole Psalm is the joy of Christ and one of the wonderful things is that Christ is given his joy in response to prayer. Verse 2, especially. You have given him his heart's desire and have not withheld the request of his lips.

How important it is? That the heart be in the prayer and not merely the lips for the Lord looks upon and responds to both. He is the response of the heart and the He responds to the prayer of the heart and the prayer of the lips and. If we drew near to him with our lips and our heart was far from him then we would be idolaters as a scripture warns but he answers both and if you have ever come to God with a full heart perhaps in response to something in his word or in response to something in your life and you're just not able to put the words together.

This should be a great encouragement to you, especially as you move into verse 3 because the word translated meat is actually a word that means confront or intercept some of the old versions said prevent for you prevent because that's one of the basic meanings or you prevent in with the blessings of goodness.

Well prevent him from what? Well, the idea is verse three the first part of verse three coming out of verse two that sometimes God answers before we speak. Sometimes and you have pictures of this I think maybe one of our favorites of course is Abraham's servant at the well praying and you know that Rebecca had to have started from home long before he started the prayer and he's young I'm still talking and he he's still talking and he looks up and behold Rebecca and how precious that is, but you prevent him with the blessings of goodness in other words anything that's good.

Anything that's perfect. God is already giving to us. And so if the thing that we're having a hard time forming words from our heart from as we lift our hearts to him and bear our hearts before him and aren't even able to put it into words ourselves, we can still have that confidence that if it is something that is good that the Lord will intercept even before we ask for you meet him or intercept him or prevent him with the blessings of goodness.

The Lord Jesus gives this as an encouragement to us for our praying. Doesn't he say you're heavenly? Father knows that you need all these things before you ask. His brother who is a teacher among the apostles and James chapter 1 and verse 17 says says the same thing every good gift and every perfect gift continually comes down from our father of lights and so God's blessing in Christ, first of all is more than we can think or ask first three verses and then verse three is kind of a hinge verse into the fact that God blesses us.

For the sake of Christ. You meet him with the blessings of goodness then second half of verse three you set a crown of pure gold upon his head. When we pray thy kingdom come we are praying for something that cannot be undone the picture here is of a coronation ceremony.

One of the one of the things that some of the commentators say oh this is a probably referring to and when David finally defeated Syria after the after the Bathsheba incident and he Joab said you better come take the city and they put the crown on the heads of mere men.

What is described in the second half of verse 3 as a coronation ceremony in which the one who does the crowning is God himself this is something that happens in glory this is the coronation of the great king from Psalm 2 and that crown which is placed upon his head from heaven cannot be taken off of his head on earth thy kingdom come thy will be done and earth as it is in heaven, so if our salvation is wrapped up in.

Christ's glory in Christ being crowned then it can never be undone. In fact in verse 4 you have his incarnation and his resurrection he asked life from you and you gave it to him that that corresponds to in Psalm 2 if you think back to that Psalm today. I have begotten you length of days forever and ever the Lord Jesus has taken on to himself humanity in order to save us.

And he has been raised again from the dead with the power of an indestructible life says the book of Hebrews, therefore he is able to save us to the uttermost. Indeed verse 5, his glory is great and your salvation. So we know that God is trying God one God and three persons from everlasting to everlasting father, son and holy spirit.

There is nothing. That the Father desires more than the glory of His Son. There is nothing that the Son desires more than the glory of His Father. And the Father has been pleased to glorify His Son in saving us. That's the whole basis of the prayer in John 17 where Jesus comes and and He prays that the Father's name would be glorified just as He is glorified.

His Son and the that. He would be glorified in the Son and the Father. Of course he desires nothing more than the glory of the sun. When you say four Christ's glory in your praying Seek that by the Spirit's help you and I would not say something like that lightly.

That is the greatest argument we can every use. Because that is the Father's pleasure in the Father's aim from all eternity within the Godhead. So of Christ's glory is a chief end of God's saving us. So our salvation is as sure as God's own commitment to the glory of Christ.

Well, not only is Christ's glory a chief end of God's saving us but Christ's gladness is for you have made him most blessed forever and have made him exceedingly glad. With your presence. Jesus' joy, we could see in Psalm 16 verse 11. In your presence as fullness of joy at your right hand our pleasures forevermore.

That's our chief joy. It is from Christ's pleasure in his father that as the pattern that our pleasure comes and if we're to look at Psalm 73 verse 25 verse 28, you find in verse 25 whom have I in heaven but you and there's nothing on earth. I desire beside you.

And then the end of that Psalm which isn't as well known, but all ought ought to be as well loved at least is for me it. Is good to draw near to God. The presence of God is the great pleasure of Christ. You have made him exceedingly glad with your presence and so you have that repeated refrain especially in the book of Revelation the dwelling place of God is with men.

We will have it again. Lord willing on the 20th in in Revelation chapter 6 that he will dwell among them that we will have the dwelling place of God with us. And so Christ's ultimate delight is in God Himself and that is what becomes our ultimate delight. Finally got Christ's faith verse first half of verse 7 for the King trusts in Yahweh.

And God's covenant love and through the mercy and the word discussed that's that covenant love that steadfast love that we have often heard about and discussed through the mercy of the most high he shall not be moved and so neither Christ's faith nor God's covenant love can ever fail.

Those who trust in the Lord those who coal upon his name those who are his will never ever. Be put to shame. Precious promise that we will be considering Lord willing on the Lord's Day as well. So you have the God's blessing in Christ is more than we can ask or think you have that.

God's blessing in Christ is bound up in Christ's glory and Christ's gladness. And then you have in the last place that God's blessing in Christ requires the cursing of his enemies. Love is not love unless it is opposed to you and destroys whatever hates its object. Every single enemy and hater of Christ must be found out and destroyed.

That included everyone of us and what we were outside of Christ. This is why it's so astonishing that God for many who are his enemies destroys who they were outside of Christ in love. God demonstrates his own love for this while we were still enemies. Christ died for us.

That's the horror of the cross. Not just thorns and nails and mocking from earth but the cry of dereliction which actually comes from the very next phrase in the soldier. The after the end of this psalm my God my God. Why have you forsaken me? And so if we were studying straight through and Lord willing will come to this again next week in Psalm 22, but we would come out of verses 8 through 12 into the horror of the beginning.

Of Psalm 22. But it is necessary that God have wrath that God have justice for all who hate Christ and for all who hate his people. If I did not oppose with all that I am everything that sought to harm or to oppose my wife my children. I would not love them.

It is required of God in order that he be good that he would hate whatever as opposed to him. And so, you have your hand will find all your enemies. There's no one who's an enemy of Christ that will go unpunished. You're right hand will find those who hate you.

And then you have this description in verse 9, you shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of your anger. Yahweh shall swallow them up in his wrath and the fire shall devour him. Devouring fire is a dreadful creature. Is created with such a nature as to make it useful for a description of God's wrath throughout Scripture.

You have Genesis 19:28 in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and their smoke goes up like a furnace. You have the flame that is not quenched in Isaiah 66 verse 24, and I didn't list all the times that our Lord Jesus uses that phrase the flame that is not quenched to describe the punishment of God the wrath of God gave you one.

Mark 9 verse 48. Second Thessalonians one eight eight and nine that the Lord Jesus will appear with burning fire and that those who have not obeyed the gospel. Will receive destruction from his presence and from his glory forever. Revelation. 9:2 that the smoke of those. The smoke of the lake of fire and those who are burning in it goes up forever and ever.

And now this is a marvel to think that God created devouring fire that consumes whatever is. Is put in it in order to show his wrath and then you look at the burnt offerings that were to be entirely consumed by fire and how they looked forward to Christ and this is also a caution against those who missed the nature of the burning the the characteristic that fire was designed to burn and consume in that way in part as a picture of God's wrath.

It's a dreadful thing. I think. To use what the Bible uniformly uses or presents as an image of the wrath of God upon the unbeliever to do that to the body of a believer. No that also that God is covenantal in his wrath. Not only does the Lord and his fire destroy them verse 9 their offspring

you shall destroy from the earth and their descendants from among the sons of man, this is why it's necessary that there be a covenant of grace in which to bring the sinner.

In order that in order that we would be not destroyed for our our our first father. Adamson, we have to be brought into another Adam so that we so that we would be made righteous and blessed for the sake of our Adam the Lord Jesus Christ. God will need leave neither root nor branch of his enemy.

And so you have to be transferred from under the headship of an enemy of Christ to under Christ himself. This is one of the reasons why it said dreadful to be put out of the covenant of grace because not only are you coming out of it yourself but you bring your children out of it with you and that's a horror there are so many parents who spend so much time thinking about how to leave their children a financial legacy and they spend so much time investing in.

In their children the building of various habits and and etiquette and character and they spend so much time getting their children training and in whether it's educational or athletic or in the arts or some other skill and yet. If we are not friends of God in Christ then everything that we have done for our children is worthless because he says of the wicked of those who are still his enemies and our outside of Christ their offspring you shall destroy from the earth and their descendants from among the sons of men.

And God grant to us that if our children are to be lost it would be that they were lost despite us. Rather than that if they would be saved it would be saved despite us. Being the friend of God as the first and greatest thing that a man can do for his children and for all of his descendants.

So God has complete in his wrath. God has come and has wrath and God is successful in his wrath verse 11 for they intended evil against you they devised a plot which they are not able to perform therefore you will make them turn their back. Let those who intend evil beware because God intends good but he also sees their evil intentions and their intentions will fail they're not able to bring about ultimately the evil that they want God makes them turn their back he says the beginning of verse 12, but God's intention for good will succeed including his intention to destroy the evil.

So let the righteous rejoice that God not only does us good in all things but that he also fully repays all who do evil Christ is the great example of this if we had time we could look at the those couple of verses from Act 2 and the longer passage enact or that God had planned everything that would happen to him and yet he punishes the evil intention of those who hated him.

And intended evil against him. All evils done against us follow the same principles. The Lord is doing you good through every evil intention that anybody else has towards you man or demon and he will also punish every evil intention against you so it's not like the Lord says well I'm doing you good through it so the evil is no big deal no the good that the Lord intends is a big deal and the evil that the wicked intend is a big deal and God is going to punish it.

And then finally be exalted oh Yahweh in your end strength, we will sing and praise your power. We read and think elsewhere in scripture the joy of the Lord is our strength the lighting in him makes us strong but here you have the converse of that the strength of the Lord is our joy he is going to accomplish the glory of his son he is going to accomplish all of his good purposes it cannot fail it cannot be stopped and we delight we are to delight in the strength of our God and to sing and to praise his power.

Which means that you are able to rejoice in the Lord always because he's always strong. We are never in a moment where we lack cause for praise and if not only is his strength our joy but his joys our strength then we are also never in a moment in which we cannot obey.

So let's come to the Lord together tonight and prayer.