

My Hiding Place

Favorite Psalms Part 18
Psalm 32:6-7 8-11-2013

In order to find closeness with God you must seek with all your heart. Why? Why does God make it so hard to find him? If he wants us to be near him, why not make it easy? This message explores the kindness of God toward us in not letting it be too easy.

Excerpt:

On her first birthday, my daughter enjoyed the wrapping paper far more than the gifts themselves, some of which she didn't even notice. The wonders of the creation and the pleasures of this world are the wrapping paper God uses to present us with the gift of his love. We so often enjoy God's gifts like a toddler enjoying her first birthday presents—focusing only on the wrapping and missing the real gift.

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Psalm 32:6 Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the flood of mighty waters rise, they shall not reach him. 7 You are my hiding place; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance. Selah.

Introduction

About eight or nine years ago I made a decision to devote the rest of my life learning as much as I possibly can about the attributes of God. If the most important thing is loving God, and loving requires knowing, then I want to know everything I possibly can about what God is like. So I went through the psalms and wrote down every attribute I could find - 378 of them. (Actually it's more than that, but I grouped a lot of them into categories, so 378 categories.) I don't understand why, in the rare occasion that you do find a book on the attributes of God, they usually only list a dozen or two. An attribute of God is anything that is true about God, and the Bible tells us a lot more than two dozen true things about God.

Another thing I don't understand is, if they are going to reduce the list down to just two dozen - why do they always include some that are mentioned only a few times in the Bible and leave out others that are emphasized over and over and over? For example, one of the most frequently mentioned attributes of God

I have never seen in any list of attributes, namely, that God is a hiding place or refuge. There are 39 different chapters devoted to describing God as refuge just in the book of Psalms. And God is described as a shelter or hiding place or refuge dozens and dozens of times.¹ Is it important that we know that God is omnipresent (that He exists in all places all the time)? Sure. It is mentioned in Scripture, and all it takes for something to be important is for it to be mentioned a single time in the Bible. So yes, that is important. But how much more exercised is the heart of God over making sure we think of Him as a refuge and fully understand what that means? He *really* wants to make sure we understand that. And so even after the many times God has already brought it up in Scripture, it comes up yet again here in the psalm we have been studying the past few weeks, Psalm 32.

6 Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the flood of mighty waters rise, they shall not reach him. 7 You are my hiding place; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

Hiding Place Needed

The Flood (Chastisement)

So the first thing we see there is our *need* for a hiding place. We need a hiding place because of the **flood of mighty waters**. That is the threat. **Mighty waters** was an idiom that referred to an overwhelming catastrophe or a disaster far beyond human ability to handle. And the word **flood** was used to refer to a disaster that swallows you up without warning or any chance of escape. In that part of the world they had these narrow canyons called wadis. And in a hard rain they could go from being a dry river bed to a wall of water crashing down through the wadi. And those flash floods could sweep away entire armies. This is the only place in the Bible that I could find where both figures of speech are used together. Not just **mighty waters**, and not just a **flood**, but a **flood of mighty waters**. Mixing those two phrases together gives the idea of the *ultimate* catastrophe.

So what is this catastrophe? It is the bit and bridle in verse 9. It is God's rod of severe discipline for sin. It is what David went through in verses 3-4 - the painful ordeal that God sends to bring a stubborn, mule-like heart to repentance. When God brings out the rod, it is like a 50 foot wall of water coming around the corner and you are in the bottom of the canyon with sheer walls. That is the picture.

Not Just Hardship - Estrangement

And it is very important to understand that there is a lot more to that flood than just hardship. There is a lot more to it than just the earthly consequences of sin. Suppose someone goes out and gets drunk, and there are all kinds of consequences. He gets a DUI, he loses his job, his wife is angry, his reputation is ruined - all kinds of natural consequences. That is not the flood. That is just some of the little ripples along the shoreline of the flood. The main part of the flood has to do with alienation and estrangement from God - having God be upset with you, God being grieved and displeased with you, so that He turns His face away from you. That is the flood.

Symptoms Of God's Displeasure

Of course, if you are a believer, God never turns His face away from you completely. But He does turn away in partial ways. And you can tell that has happened when you lose relational closeness with Him. You lose the ability to enjoy the experience of His attributes. You still *know* about His power, but

¹ This is a small sampling of examples: Ps.2:12, 3:2, 5:11, 7:1, 9:9, 13:6, 16:1,8, 18:2,3,19, 25:20, 27:1,5, 28:7,8, 31:1-5,19,20, 32:7, 33:20, 34:8,20,22, 36:7, 37:29,33,39,40, 40:14,17, 43:2, 46:1,7,11, 48:3,8, 52:7, 57:1, 59:9,16, 61:3,4, 62:2,6,7,8, 63:7, 64:10, 71:3, 73:28, 84:11, 89:18, 94:22, 97:10, 115:9-11, 118:8,9, 119:114, 139:4, 140:1-13, 141:8-10, 142:5, 143:9, 144:2,7,10-15, Ps.4:8, 23:1-4, 32:7, 56:1-4, 91:1-5,9, 94:19, 121:5, 109:26-31.

you do not feel a sense of awe from it. You still *know* about His mercy, but it does not fill you with feelings of gratitude like it did before. You still have knowledge about His wisdom, but it does not cause feelings of delight and joy.

You also lose your ability to enjoy God through His gifts. Things like a good night's sleep, a tasty meal, a cool breeze, some money in the bank, interactions from a friend or your spouse or a family member, a spectacular lightening storm - all the various joys of life. You might be able to enjoy those things (atheists can enjoy those things), but you will no longer be able to enjoy God through those things.

When God expresses His love to us, that is a gift. And the pleasures of life are the way God presents the gift. They are the wrapping paper. I remember Carolyn-Nicole's first Christmas. We gave her gifts, but she was far more interested in the wrapping paper than the thing inside the box. She just loved putting paper in her mouth. If I bought her a new car and wrapped up the key in a little box, she would have enjoyed it, but the only enjoyment she would have gotten out of it would have been the enjoyment of the paper - nothing else. You have to be a little older to appreciate the new car. That is how God's gifts are. The gift is the expression of His love - that is like the new car. And the cool breeze, tasty meal, wonderful friendship, unexpected bonus at work - those are the wrapping paper. Unbelievers enjoy God's gifts like babies - just the wrapping, and not the actual gift. They cannot have any kind of satisfying interaction with God through that gift. The best they can do is enjoy the paper. In fact, in some cases that even goes away. You cannot even enjoy a good meal or a cool breeze. Nothing brings you joy. And when God begins to turn His face away from us, the more He does so, the more we end up like that. No joy from your interactions with God, no peace, no strength, no insight, no rest, no passion, no motivation, etc.

That is the flood - not just the external consequences of sin. If two different Christians get drunk, and they both go to jail and they both lose their jobs, if God turns His face toward one of them and not the other one, then that first one will be able to have joy and hope and strength and all the rest while he serves his time in jail, and the other one will not be able to have those things. Both will be in jail, but only one is getting hit with the flood.

The Dam Breaks Every Time We Sin

So, what is our need for a hiding place? Why do we need a refuge? Because that is the only way to be safe from the flood. And it is important to note that David does not say that if we pray to God while He may be found, then the flood will never rise. What he says is that the flood will still come, but you will be sheltered from it. Why paint the picture that way? Why not just say, "If you repent in time, then there is no flood"?

I think it is probably because God wants us to understand that He is always angry about sin. God cannot wink at sin - any sin - ever. When someone apologizes to you for something, there are two responses we typically have. If the thing they did is no big deal we say, "It's OK."

"Oops, sorry - I stepped on your toe."

"It's OK - don't worry about it."

But if the thing they did was especially serious, instead of saying, "It's OK," we say, "I forgive you." When we repent of a sin, God always says, "I forgive you." But He wants us to understand that what we did is not OK. God is perfectly good, which means He must have perfect anger over evil. Any time evil does not bother you, that means you are evil. And God is never evil, which means He always has an awesome, holy reaction against all sin.

So think of it this way - every time I knowingly, willfully sin, the dam upstream breaks, and the wall of water is on its way. And there is a little bit of time before it reaches me. If I repent before it gets to me, God will become a shelter for me so that the flood will not reach me. The dam breaks every single time, but it only reaches you if you go too long in unrepentance. And you never know how far upstream the dam is, so there is urgency to repent immediately. Because once you see that wall of water, it will be too late. We found last week that once that wall of water hits, the devastation usually goes on for a long time. Being estranged from God and having Him turn His face away tends to have a hardening effect on our hearts. And the result is it is very hard to genuinely repent. We will see exactly how all that works in the

next study when we take a look at Hosea 5. But for now, just understand that God uses the imagery of a flood to show us our need for a hiding place. We are pressing buttons that are blowing up dams upstream constantly and so to be protected we must have a lifestyle of taking refuge.

Hiding Place Identified

But what is the refuge? Where can I run and hide from God's rod of discipline? That is a hard thing to do, because God has a bunker-busting rod. Most shelters where people try to hide from God's rod do not work at all.

Not In Earthly Shelters

People try all kinds of things to escape the flood. They try moving away, or changing churches, or leaving their spouse. But that won't work. When they get to wherever they are running they find that God's rod is already there, waiting for them. Others run to alcohol or drugs. Some people think a quart of Hagen Daz will make it all go away. Some even run to religion. They get real religious and start doing all kinds of things in the church. That does not work either. Others try to escape through agnosticism or atheism. If I just act like He doesn't exist, maybe He will go away.

"If He takes the rod to my back, I'll get even with Him by refusing to believe in Him."

His rod will bust through all those bunkers. Trying to escape His discipline by running to those things is like having hundreds of nuclear bombs dropping on you in an air raid and putting a newspaper over your head for protection.

Shelter In His Presence

When that dam breaks and the flood is coming, there is only one shelter that can withstand the force of that wall of water. It is in verse 7.

6 Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the flood of mighty waters rise, they shall not reach him. 7 You are my hiding place

The only hiding place from the rod of God's displeasure is the refuge of God's forgiveness. The only way out of the woodshed is to run straight into the arms of His love. If you wanted to escape the wrath of your earthly father you might run away from him. But the only way to escape the wrath of your heavenly Father is to run toward Him.

Keep Short Accounts

If you want a good relationship with God - a close, intimate, loving, delightful relationship with God, you do not have to avoid sin altogether. That is not possible in this life. The way to have that relationship is by being quick to repent when you sin.

And that it is not hard to understand because that is the way God designed human relationships too. If I am short with my wife and I snap at her in a moment of irritation, at that point it can go two ways. I can deal with it immediately or I can delay. If I delay repentance - I just don't say anything and wait for her to get over it, or I realize it but I try to blame her ("You shouldn't have kept nagging," or, "It's because you were being disrespectful and treating me like a child," or, "It wasn't that bad, and I'm tired and my back is aching today..."), or maybe I am just so insensitive that I don't even realize I have hurt her - any of those kinds of reactions and what happens? Our relationship is strained, we are at odds with each other, cold shoulders, maybe sleeping back to back that night, and the longer that goes on the harder it is to get back into closeness with each other. (In many cases it never gets dealt with, and it just adds to the pile of the wife's mountain of resentment, and once that happens it does not even do any good to apologize for

that one thing because it has become a part of a huge mass of offenses.) But the other option is to just deal with it immediately. Two seconds after the harsh words come out I say, "I'm sorry, honey. I just now kind of snapped at you. That wasn't a very loving speech. Will you forgive me?" Every time I do that Tracy immediately forgives, and we are as close as can be right away. Instead of a huge disruption in our marriage, it is a tiny little blip. This is the way God designed human relationships to flourish, so that we will understand that this is also the way we are to be with God.

Hiding Place Sought

So the reason I need a refuge is because of God's displeasure over my sin. And the only refuge that will work is the hiding place of God's forgiveness. So how do I get there? What do I have to do to experience God as my hiding place? The answer is in verse 6, but halfway through that verse there is a shocking word.

God Is Not Easily Found

There is a word that, I think most Christians would be shocked if they noticed it. It is the word **found**.

6 Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found

Is God lost? Why do we need to find Him? Why does the Bible so often tell us to seek God and strive to find Him? Obviously it is not talking about literal, geographical searching, as if God were in some hidden place and you had to travel there. It is talking about seeking His face - seeking closeness with Him again. It would be like if you had a fight with your spouse and someone said, "Go and seek reconciliation." It means try to find a way to be close again.

In many cases, when we don't feel any joy or hope or peace or delight or strength – it is not that God has turned His face away. The flood has not hit yet - God has not withdrawn Himself, or hidden Himself. The reason we lack joy and closeness with God is simply because we have failed to seek Him.

Seeking vs. Going

I think it is instructive that God so often tells us to seek Him rather than just saying, "Go to God." What is the difference between going to a place and seeking that place? When you go somewhere, you just point your car in the right direction, and depending on the miles and your speed you can predict exactly when you will arrive. When you are seeking - searching for some place, you cannot predict when you will arrive.

Now, do we know the way to God? Yes. Scripture tells us how to approach God's presence. Is God's presence always available to His children? Yes. So why does the Bible so often tell us to seek Him rather than just saying, "Go to Him"? Why the uncertainty of the outcome? The outcome is uncertain because finding God requires two things: 1) Knowing how to approach Him, and 2) the earnestness with which we seek. Sometimes we fail to find nearness with God because we do not know how. Many Christians do not even know what nearness to God means. They think it is some strange, mystical, religious experience, or a feeling that is impossible to put into words, or a tingling in the body, etc. They don't realize that it is a conscious, satisfying experience of His attributes. You cannot find nearness to God unless you know what the Bible says about what nearness to God is and how to find it.

And then, even if you do know those things, it is still possible to seek Him and not find Him if we do not seek Him with enough earnestness.

Jeremiah 29:13 You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.

Deuteronomy 4:29 But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.

God will not dishonor Himself by allowing Himself to be found by halfhearted seekers.

Why Doesn't God Just Forgive Everyone? Because He Is Good

Why is that? Why does God require such earnest, wholehearted seeking? If He wants us to find Him, why would He make it hard? Why not make it easy? For that matter, why require repentance at all? Why doesn't God just forgive everybody? Why not just make His love unconditional? Many people teach that God's love is unconditional, but it isn't. The condition is confession and repentance. But why? Why doesn't God just do what Rob Bell teaches that He does - just wave His hand over the entire human race and forgive everyone's sin, and bring every single person to heaven regardless of repentance or no repentance? I mean, He is the God of all grace, right? Doesn't He have infinite grace? Doesn't He have enough grace to just give every person a clean slate right now?

The answer is yes, He has more than enough grace to do that. The thing that prevents Him from doing that is not a lack of grace. The thing that prevents God from doing that is His goodness. God is good, which means He only does good things - never bad things. What good would it do if God forgave everyone? What purpose would it serve?

"It would bring the maximum possible number of people to heaven. Isn't that the goal?"

No, it is not the goal. The purpose of forgiveness is not just the avoidance of punishment. The main purpose is the restoration of a relationship, which means it has to be two-sided. When a relationship is broken, it is not restored until it is restored from both ends.

A one-sided relationship is not a relationship. It is a crush. And God is not some junior-high-school-girl with a crush. God is a mighty King who will conquer all enemies and punish them some day, but now He is offering forgiveness to anyone who will lay down the weapons of rebellion and repent. Do that, and God will forgive you and go so far as to adopt you into His very family! But if you do not repent, what would be the point of forgiveness?

Imagine a man with a 14-year-old son who is starting to become lazy and indolent. The father knows that is not the path toward greatest joy, so he pulls his son aside and makes an effort to lovingly, gently correct his son and show him a better way. The son is offended, and flies off the handle. He starts yelling and swearing, and he becomes violent and starts throwing things around the room. He kicks the table over, storms out, and slams the door.

Now the relationship between father and son is fractured. It is not close and warm like it used to be. And that breaks the father's heart. The father's goal at this point is for that relationship to be restored.

A few hours later the son comes back in the house for some supper. The father goes right up to him and says, "Son, I forgive you." And the kid says, "Ha! Yeah, *whatever*," and heads for the kitchen. Let me ask you - has the father reached his goal? The kid is not being punished - isn't that the ultimate goal? No! That is not the goal. The goal is the restoration of the relationship. If the father gives the kid all kinds of rewards, but the relationship remains broken, what good is that?

God is good, and He only does good things. In fact, He only does what is best. Obviously - He has infinite power and infinite wisdom, so why would He ever do something less than what is the absolute best thing to do? So God always does what is best. So, what is best? What is the best possible thing that could ever happen in the universe? The best thing that could ever happen would be for God to be glorified and honored. The best possible thing would be for God's glory to be exposed and put on display so that created beings see it and honor Him by liking what they see. That is the best thing that can happen.

What is the best thing that can happen to you? The best possible thing that could ever happen to you would be for you to enjoy the greatest enjoyment there is. The best thing for you would be for you to see the most beautiful thing, to enjoy the most delightful thing, and to possess the most valuable thing. What is the most beautiful, most delightful, most valuable treasure? God. It does not seem that way to us because of spiritual blindness, but the more our eyes are opened to reality, the more we can see that God is the greatest treasure. So the best possible thing that could happen to you personally would be for you to see God's glory and enjoy it.

That means the best possible thing that can happen in the universe and the best thing that could possibly happen to you are exactly the same thing - for God's glory to be seen and for you to see it and take delight in it. That is the epitome of good. Anything short of that is not good.

So back to the question - why doesn't God just forgive everyone even if they don't repent? Why doesn't the king just take all the rebels into His house, even while they remain determined to fight against Him? Because that is not good. God would not be glorified because they would not be taking delight in Him. And it would not be good for the sinners either, because they would not be enjoying the glory of God. They would continue to hate it.

We talk about going to heaven as the goal - as if the joy came from simply going to a certain place. Going to heaven is like going to your father's house. It is only a good thing if you like your father. If you are not on good terms with your father, going to his house is no fun at all. So the reason God requires repentance before He forgives is because the purpose of forgiveness is the restoration of the relationship from both sides.

God is not looking for people to click "like" on His Facebook page. God is not looking for fans. Someone recently loaned me the movie "Not a Fan." That movie hits the nail right on the head - God isn't looking for fans. Churches are filled with fans of Jesus Christ - people who like Jesus, but who are not devoted followers. Those people think they are saved, but they are not. God is not interested in popularity. He wants intimacy. He wants real relationship or no relationship. Why? Because He knows that being a fan of Jesus doesn't do us any good. He knows that what we need is to be close to Him, and closeness requires earnest seeking on our end. No relationship will be close if one party is pursuing and the other party is just coasting. There is no one-sided intimacy. God knows the best thing for us is if we are close to Him - the closer the better. And that does not happen through halfhearted seeking.

Not only that, but if I am only seeking God with part of my soul, the rest of my soul will be seeking something else. And any time that is happening, I am pouring poison down my throat. When I have love for some sin poisoning my heart, God is not going to just let that continue to destroy me. God will not allow Himself to be found by me unless I seek Him with all my heart because anything less and what I end up with is a half-baked relationship with God that both dishonors Him and destroys me. God is doing us a favor by requiring earnest seeking. We are so much better off if we seek earnestly.

While He May Be Found Or Until He May Be Found

So if you are seeking and not finding, it may be that God is withdrawing, not because He is angry, but in order to cause you to seek more earnestly. But what if it is because God is displeased with you? It does not matter. Either way - no matter what the reason for your distance from God, the solution is always the same - seek Him. If you just committed the sin five minutes ago and the flash flood hasn't hit yet - seek Him *while* He may be found. If it is too late and the flood has already swept over you, seek Him *until* He may be found. Isn't that what David did? David acted like a mule, he persisted in unrepentant sin too long; God had to bring out the bit and bridle, and David had to go through all the agony of verses 3-4. He didn't seek God while He could still be found, but then look at verse 7.

7 You are my hiding place; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

Who is talking there? David! Even though he waited too long and had to undergo the rod, when he finally did come to full repentance, God forgave him.

5Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

It does not matter what your situation is, the best thing to do is always the same - seek hard after God.

Hiding Place Found

So, we have considered the *need* for a hiding place (the flood), the *identity* of the hiding place (God's forgiveness), and the *seeking* of that hiding place. One last point: The *finding* of that hiding place. When verse 6 tells us to **pray to the Lord while he may be found**, that implies that God may be found. If the whole point of all this is that God wants restored intimacy with you, do you think He is going to put it out of your reach, or within your reach? God wants this to happen. He is more eager to forgive you than you are to be forgiven. Sometimes people come to the conclusion that it is next to impossible to be restored to God's favor and draw near to Him, and they figure He must just be perpetually angry and displeased with them because they feel so little joy most of the time. And if that is you, you need to understand that lack of joy can have a lot of different causes. It would be a mistake to always attribute it to God being displeased with you. God is not slow to forgive.

And again - we are talking about family-type forgiveness here, not eternal forgiveness. As believers, we are eternally forgiven for all our sins without interruption 24 hours a day, seven days a week - all the time. Even while we are sinning. We have eternal forgiveness in our justification. But there is another kind of forgiveness. Family forgiveness. The restoration of the broken intimacy with God. And that is something that needs to be restored each time it is broken.

And the way to restore it is through confession. So if you have confessed your sin, you should assume you are forgiven. Once you have repented you should assume, "OK, things are good between me and God now." Do not let your own self-condemnation make you doubt God's forgiveness. Do not assume God is frowning at you just because you are frowning at yourself.

How To Know When It's Over

Now, are there times when our repentance is so shallow and our grief over sin is so little that God continues to withhold His presence from us until we become sufficiently broken? Yes. How do you know when that is happening? For a while it is appropriate to grieve and mourn over your sin. But there comes a point when that period is over and it is time to seek joy in God again. It is appropriate to be like Peter and go out and weep bitterly when you sin. And it really would not be appropriate during that time to be jovial and lighthearted. But then even in the case of a very severe fall like Peter's or David's, there comes a time when God says, "OK, you've shed enough tears. You have been broken and contrite long enough. You have sought My face long enough, now I am going to put aside My displeasure. It's over. It's OK for you to return to joy now." How do you know when that moment has come?

God is not angry over daily stumbles

First of all, Peter went out and wept bitterly when he publically denied Christ three times. But he did not weep bitterly every single time he committed any sin. That would be impossible - you would do nothing but weep bitterly. The same is true of David.

1 Kings 15:5 because David did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and did not turn aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

Does that mean David only committed one sin his whole life? No. He committed sins every day. But there was only one time in his life when he had such a severe rebellion against God and such an extended period before repenting. In the case of a very severe fall, the process of repentance can be an extended one, where the grief and brokenness can go on for hours - or even for days in some really extreme cases. And I think in those rare instances, there is no question that is what is happening.

The most important guiding principle I think I can give you with regard to that is this: if the effect of God's displeasure is inability to enjoy Him, then once that subsides, you know you have been forgiven. If your ability to draw near to God and enjoy Him through His gifts is normally at, say, a 30 on the scale,

but after some very severe sin it drops to a 5, then you continue to grieve and mourn and weep bitterly and confess your sin to God until it goes back to around 30.

And if it seems to be going on and on, consider the possibility that you are keeping it low yourself, through self-condemnation. God is giving you the ability to enjoy His gifts, but you are holding that enjoyment at arm's length because you feel the need to punish yourself. Sometimes we will commit some terrible sin, and five minutes after we confess it to God all of a sudden blessings are coming our way. And we think, "No, surely not yet." Don't think that way. If God gives you blessings and enables you to enjoy them, that means in His eyes this whole thing is over. So let it go, and rejoice in His forgiveness. When in doubt, assume you are forgiven.

When God is unhappy with you it dries up your whole life and takes away your joy. There is a sense of darkness and gloom over your life and an inability to enjoy God's presence through His gifts. You open your Bible and it is just print on a page. You try to pray and there is no sense at all of God's presence or His smile. You try to serve in ministry and it is like your gifts are dried up. All your work feels like spinning your wheels. You do not have favor in people's eyes. A beautiful sunrise leaves you flat; a delicious meal is just – blah. Relationships fall apart.

Those things happen to all of us in some measure all the time. So do not automatically assume it is because of sin. But in those times when it clearly is (there is one specific sin that you can easily point to, and these are clearly connected to that sin) you know God's displeasure with you has passed when those things have passed. Your ability to enjoy God's presence through good things returns to normal levels. Your ability to delight in worship, in His Word, in His people – all the joys of knowing God return to normal levels. Insight returns to normal levels - you can understand what you read in Scripture and see how it applies to your life. Effectiveness in ministry returns, good desires return. Interpret all of that as God saying, "OK, it's over now. Everything is just fine between us now."

So, if the flood has not hit yet, seek the Lord while He may be found. And if the flood has hit, seek the Lord until He may be found. But one last question - how do you do that? What does it mean to seek God? How do I go about it? That is where we will pick it up next time.

Benediction: Ephesians 1:3-7 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins

1:25 Questions

1. The more we understand the degree of danger the flood poses, the greater will be our joy in being protected from it. In your life, what stands in the way of you having a greater appreciation for how much you are being protected from when you enjoy Christ as your hiding place?
2. How would you rate the intensity level of your hour-by-hour seeking after nearness with God? What would it look like if you took that up one notch?