

Psalms

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Date: 29 October 1970

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- [0 : 00] If the Lord may help this evening I will direct your attention to Psalm 48 verse 14.
- Psalm 48 verse 14. For this God is our God forever and ever.
- He will be our guide even unto death. For this God is our God forever and ever.
- He will be our guide even unto death. If there is one thing I feel needful above everything else, it is to feel an establishment in regard to those things which are most surely believed among us.
- The psalmist felt it when he said, He has set my feet upon a rock and established my goings.
- [1 : 17] It is an unpleasant experience, though perhaps it may often be an experience with some, to be blown about with every wind of doctrine.
- It is good to be established in a good thing. And it is certainly good for us to be established so that we may bear testimony, as the psalmist bears testimony here, for this God is our God forever and ever.
- So the first point for our consideration is for this God is our God.
- We are bound to inquire to whom and what are the characteristics of the person, the God to whom the psalmist refers.
- But in reading the three psalms, we have not to go further for immediate headings, as it were, for an enlargement upon these few opening words this evening.
- [2 : 41] For this God is our God. So, if we look at the beginning of the 46th psalm, we find that this profession of the psalmist's faith, God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
- Now, perhaps as we read through these psalms, you may have noticed that it is spoken of, God is known in her palaces for a refuge.
- So, when we read, God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, it was something that he had known.
- It was a testimony that he bore by personal experience. If we are to be established in the present truth, we can only be so as we are blessed and favoured to be able to say, God is known in her palaces for a refuge.
- Now, may we dwell a few moments upon this particular point. Now, we shall not find or have any interest in or seek for God to be a refuge under all circumstances.
- [4 : 30] But there will be certain circumstances wherein God will be sought for as a refuge and found as a refuge.
- In the prophecy of Isaiah, we read about driven out of refuges of lies. I feel we may say that every one of God's creatures as individuals, that is, the children of wrath, and we are all the children of wrath, even as others, in our original state, that each and every one of us here this evening, at some time or other, have been sheltering in a refuge of lies.

That is, our heart has deceived ourselves. Now, you will perhaps be more familiar, I'm sure you will be, of your own experience, which may be peculiar to you, but, as God may direct our thoughts, perhaps we may mention one or two refuges of lies out of which the people are driven, the people whom God loves are driven, and one is that refuge which is in self.

and when we consider our refuge in self, then it is a refuge which is contained in our own works and our own righteousness.

forgiveness. But we have to come much closer than that because God drive, may drive your soul out of trusting in yourself and then may drive you out of another refuge refuge, which is a refuge of lives when you begin to come to depend upon your spiritual activity or the activity of God's grace in your hearts.

[7 : 19] if you have come to the house of God this evening seeking a blessing as I would judge that some of you if not most of you if not all of you have then we may examine the point as to how you have come.

What is your recommendation? Well sometimes one would have to confess that there has been a little reliance upon the fact that their mind has been spiritually engaged during the day that there has been a deal of attention to the word of God and that there has been a sweet and blessed communion with the Lord.

Now we're not going to say anything against that at all until it comes to the point that you come to the house of God and you expect that God to bless you because grace has become a snare and you have suddenly felt that because you have been so highly favoured in your spirit your heart deceiving you that by reason of that you will obtain a blessing this evening.

Now I'm not going to say that you will not obtain a blessing this evening because God may preserve you from that snare but it is a refuge of lies wherein we make in great a snare.

but where do we go and what happens if we are driven out of one refuge?

[9 : 17] Perhaps it has been a long process with us to bring us finally to this great declaration that God is our refuge.

So we have been pressed out of one refuge into another and each has been a refuge of lies. How very disturbing.

things. God is teaching in these things because there is only one refuge and if you are God's child you have got to know that great and glorious truth.

Why have you got to know it? In order that you may be established in the present truth. That is why you have got to know it and that is why God will chase you out of all refuges of lies.

But then there is another refuge that we may just refer to in passing and that is as it relates to that warning given trust ye not in a friend.

[10 : 39] Well this may seem reasonable. surely I can trust in my friend well we will only say that the word of God warns you against it.

Because if you do you are coming very close to indeed you are falling into this very sad refuge but a refuge of lies.

Why do you trust in a friend? Well sometimes we have trusted in a friend for wisdom. Wisdom in respect to what?

Have you not been in the place where perhaps you look in the word in the scripture shall we say and you have been puzzled by it.

You have said I will go and ask my friend. Perhaps you have said I will go and ask my friend he will know. Well let me tell you right now friends that the minister doesn't always know.

[12 : 00] And sometimes the Lord will keep an understanding of even a particular passage of the word of God from him in order that it may drive you from that refuge of lies.

Now of course I am speaking here of individual experiences wherein God is teaching you and driving you to the only source of wisdom.

I am not suggesting that you should cease to confide in your friend. I am not suggesting that there should never be an occasion when you will not inquire even of the minister in respect to certain passages of the word of God.

Indeed often this may form a basis of very spiritual conversation and beneficial soul nourishing conversation.

but at the same time that which we are really pushing to this evening is the spirit of the thing.

[13 : 13] You see we may do the same thing in two spirits and one is right and one is wrong. So that if we should come to our friend and commend our friend to God that the Lord may give our friend wisdom then as we come together to consider this passage of the word of God we shall be before God in prayer that there may be the blessing of two being better than one for if one fall another shall lift him up but if we fail to come in that way then we are putting a trust in a friend which is not right before God and we have to ever remember that our God is a jealous God well now we must not remain any longer on the false refuges but rather do we want to come to

God is our refuge may we ask you what can you say about that has he been your refuge once a refuge always a refuge if the Lord has revealed himself to your soul as your refuge and when is it well the hymn writer surely makes it very clear other refuge have I none now that's the time when you can say that God is your refuge and no other time other refuge have I none hang from from from the accusations of

God's law God's holy law and the condemnation which it brings it is a refuge from the wrath of God against sin it is a refuge from the powerful attacks of Satan and his evil spirits which sometimes he sends even to torment the people of God God is a refuge can you see it can you get this picture in your mind of this poor creature may we excuse the expression a cliffhanger absolutely ready to perish depending upon God to come and be his refuge come and hold out his hand and deliver him from going down into the pit

God is our refuge how good it is to know this you know we shall need this refuge if we know God as this refuge even more yet and that will be when we come to die oh how blessedly and sweetly is it expressed in that great moment oh to hide beneath his sheltering blood will Jordan's icy wave divide and land my soul with God so there is this particular and undeniable and enforceable point in respect to the refuge that it has success with it it is impregnable it cannot on any account be moved just think of it friends in that great moment and who could look this monster in the face except

Jesus shines within and we've all come into it we know not how soon have you sometimes waved the matter up as to how you will stand in the swellings of Jordan you'll need a refuge but if you have the experience here expressed by David God is our refuge he is a known refuge he is a proved refuge he has been my refuge when men have risen up against me oh he speaks of it in one of those short psalms if it had not been the Lord who was on our side now may Israel say if it had not been the Lord who was on our side when men rose up against us they had swallowed us up quick when their wrath was kindled against us then the waters has overwhelmed us the stream has gone over our soul then the proud waters have gone over our soul does it line up with any part of your life what follows blessed be the

[19 : 29] Lord who has not given us as a prey to their teeth because God has been proved and known as a refuge our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the power of the snare is broken and we are escaped our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth but the psalmist also says that God is strength God is strength refuge and strength now bear this in mind as we proceed for this God is our God and this is the part of the word that we seek to open up at this particular time

I feel that the subject is inexhaustible and so we need God to direct us to those particular aspects of this great word that he has appointed for us to know about at this time that God is our strength now when is God our strength Paul makes it very clear when the thorn in the flesh that messenger of Satan above it him lest he should be exalted by the extent of the revelations God gave him these words my grace is sufficient for thee my strength is made perfect in weakness

God is our strength here again God is known he is known a guilty weak and helpless worm on thy kind arms I fall be thou my strength and righteousness my Jesus and my all have you ever prayed like that then if you have prayed like that you can come in and say for this God is our God God who is my strength seems to come into my mind that somewhere I believe it is in the Psalms God is the strength of my heart the strength of my heart may we not say that

God is the strength of my faith God is the strength of my prayer God is the strength of my hope now just a few points a few words on each of these points first of all we will speak of God being the strength of our hope no we've got to lay things side by side with the critical words of the scripture hope may be viewed from two points there is the hope of the hypocrite and there is the hope of the child of God when I visited a few weeks ago one of our dear friends who has now departed to be with Christ which is far better and I have no question about it she in the course of a little conversation she said

I'm afraid that I perhaps am a hypocrite after all and the words that came into my mind to speak to her were these the hope of the hypocrite shall perish but your hope is cast within the veil at which her face lit up she clapped her hands together and I thought of it as I read this chapter oh clap your hands all ye people and she said isn't that wonderful this God for this God who is the strength of my hope good to have the testimony of a dying person to see that their hope hasn't gone out hasn't perished sometimes we are tempted to think it may do how encouraging to see a poor

[25 : 04] I say a poor it is an expression we use a poor believer and the poverty is to be discovered in the fact that the hope cannot be maintained of herself of yourself of myself but nevertheless it is a hope cast within the veil now isn't that a wonderful scripture in the Hebrews which says which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast which entereth within the veil whither the forerunner is for us entered even Jesus and this God is our God our God of strength who has given to us a strength of hope and it is a strength of hope because his anchor is cast within the veil may you know friends the ship may lie at anchor and it may be the subject of many tossings especially if the wind should flow and the tempest should come with great ferocity we may look at it if we could from afar we may wonder how it was that its moorings were not broken but it laid at anchor and that anchor was no doubt caught upon a sure rock is our anchor in this blessed and glorious

God as he is revealed to us in the person of Jesus Christ our anchor cast within the veil veil then we may truly join with the sweet comforting words of the hymn writer and say though trouble now perhaps this is where some you may be though trouble now you're thy heart appalled and deep to deep in seven calls no storm shall injure thee thy anchor once in Jesus cast shall hold thy soul till thou at last him face to face shall see this God is our

God who is the strength of our hope but God our God is also the strength of our faith isn't he or is your faith one that you are able to maintain yourself sometimes God's children are very cast down because their faith seems to be virtually non-existent and it is almost tantalizing when people may come to them and say but you must trust you must believe well one good man said oh could I but believe then all would easy be now you know friends we're not we're not embarking on a negative course when we say this we're only stating a very solemn truth which is discovered in the experience of the people of

God but why is it found in the experience of the people of God that they may discover that this God is our God who is the strength of our faith and because God is the strength of our faith it lives and labors under load though damp it never dies perhaps sometimes you have marveled that you have been believing still if the host of devils should appear to you if atheists should meet you as he met the pilgrims in the pilgrims progress and said I've been there there's no such place place well you know friends you're not going to easily stand about before it you'll need something more than a natural faith because many people have had atheists come to them and he has said there's no such place and maybe you could find some in this town who said oh yes

I used to go to church or chapel but I finish with it now why because atheists have met them and said there's no such place and perhaps he's met you and said there's no such place and yet you're still continuing and yet you're still praying and yet you're still waiting upon God and if you're praying and waiting upon God well what does that mean whoso cometh to God must believe as he is and that he is the reward of them that diligently speak him so therefore where is the strength of your faith how is it that you've been able to continue to pray and believe that God is in heaven must we not say our faith is in God is in God for this God is our

[31 : 23] God who is the strength of my faith but then the psalmist goes on to say that he is a very present help in trouble a very present help people come into trouble sometimes shall we put a theme before you there are places in the Scottish Highlands that are so remote that if you were in trouble and if you had a voice of great strength it would be no avail because you were out of earshot of any living person you were in the midst of absolute desolation not a soul was likely to come near what are you going to do well if you should be in the literal situation will it not be good will it not cause your heart to rejoice if you found that

God was a very present help he could come to you in that desolated place where no man was likely to come perhaps for hours but God could come God could come but we may see its spiritual counterparts we are desolate none can help my soul none can help my soul perhaps we've met cases we've seen people in great distress we've seen them severely tempted perhaps we have endeavoured to comfort them but the comfort has been unavailing beautiful words perhaps we have sought to quote from the scriptures but no man could comfort their soul desolation cut off they might be in the same scene far away from mankind as far as real help could come oh what an extremity and furthermore such isolation will often bring many terrors not only are we alone but there are many terrors darkly falls and what happens then the word of God tells us the beast of the earth creeps forth

God where is God with all these beasts creeping forth beasts what kind of beasts beasts luther speaks about that beast of reason and that's a very ferocious beast sometimes and then there's a beast of unbelief and the beast of infidelity and all other beasts that we may consider they will all seem to threaten your death you're going to starve here this is going to be the end of you and Satan won't be long before you come and say now this is how I would like it and you may hear others saying as David heard them say aha so would we have it we've been waiting for this moment now that you're cast right out in the midst of this desolate state where you are virtually without hope who's going to take notice of you now what a testimony if God comes if God proves to you that he is a refuge and strength and a very present help in trouble and it is trouble isn't it whether it be literal trouble or much more soul trouble we don't hear much about it now

I was very taken I heard a young man quite a young man a few months ago at the prayer meeting he prayed for that the Lord might be merciful and help those that were in soul trouble can you can you remember can you remember the last time when people put up a petition for a person that's in soul trouble but if we're in soul trouble we should need God to be a very present help because everybody else will forsake you you know when you're in soul trouble they'll forsake you they'll forsake you really because they can do nothing who can save your soul who can deliver you from going down to the pit but here we have to have a testimony of the psalmist for this God is our God who delivers my soul in soul trouble he was a very present help he came where I was so we have rejoiced in the parable of the good Samaritan he came where he was the priest and the Levite they walked by on the other side perforce they had to they had nothing to offer the man was desolate he was beyond the reach of human health so God is known as a refuge as a very present help and though we may seem to have spoken from this first verse of the 46th psalm yet the words we have before us is a testimony so we have to refer back to some of the things that David has said in order that his testimony may be established because if you were to say for this God is our God forever and ever

I should be quite within my right to say well now what God do you mean so we are quite within our right to look back at David's previous professions that we may know what God he refers to but now as we look down farther in the 46th psalm we find this the Lord of hosts is with us for this God is our God the Lord of hosts is with us we sometimes sing a well known hymn when hosts of enemies rise up to fill us with dismay the Lord will make his goodness pass before us in the way

[39 : 47] Joseph Hart says mighty enemies without much mightier within each individual person walks an individual path and that path if we are the people of God is known for the most part within you see the most we can do is to look at people's outward path and if a great deal of pain and affliction is apparent if perhaps they have suffered bereavement one on top of the other if perhaps we may look at Job's case then perhaps we would willingly say oh Job is in a very sad case he is terribly afflicted and so we might say in respect to people that apparently that that have trials that appear now I'm not going to make light of it because I know these things are very real but the appearance belies the depth often you can't get into that person's soul can you that is bereaved that has suffered the loss of their loved one you can't get into their soul and measure the depth of their sorrow neither can you get into their soul to measure the extent of their ecstasy if like Job they're able to say the Lord gave the Lord hath taken away blessed be the name of the Lord but there is the point we wish to come to is this there are far many more things involved than the mere outward appearance of the matter you see if we may look at a person suffering much affliction we offer our sympathy lame as it is if we see a person passing through bereavement and more bereavement well we would offer our sympathy lame again but you see we don't know what's going on inside we can't penetrate to see the enemies that are rising up to fill them with dismay we can't see the temptations that are envisaged that bring to their mind a scene of a future demoralised just think of it friends sometimes people are suddenly taken from their health and strength and brought down in a moment their whole future is demoralised well I know we may say oh isn't that solemn isn't it dreadful but you know we are in some respects in a measure we're a bit hypocritical because it doesn't affect us does it our future isn't affected but that person's future is perhaps yours a scene you've known the host of enemies that have risen up to fill you with dismay oh the

dismay what should I do now or shall we transfer it to the case of a dear husband that has been taken away all my support has gone just to mention one aspect of it not to say anything about the fearful unbelief that arises perhaps the spasms of rebellion that come forth though they may be controlled these are hosts hosts and hosts will have a frightening effect for this God is our God the Lord of hosts what do we mean when we say the

Lord of hosts well we mean that he has complete control over the hosts now can I ask you to look back over your little span to see whether there's been such an occasion when the hosts have arisen people have seen the outside shell as it were they've seen the bereavement they've seen the affliction but they haven't seen the hosts within have you been supported how have you been delivered it is because of your knowing that God is the Lord of hosts thus shall they'll come and no further and here shall thy proud wave be stayed there's only one that can speak those kind of words and that is the

Lord of hosts and we say for this God is our God he has been the Lord of hosts but he is the Lord over hosts of devils and devilish thoughts that may come into your mind he is the Lord of hosts as it may refer to the lust of your heart he controls them he puts them down what a wonderful mercy can we say that is this the God that we profess when we say this God is our God one that has put down and controlled the hosts of wickedness of wretchedness of sensuality of devilishness that has arisen in our hearts sometimes

God has risen and appeared as the Lord of hosts for this God is our God now at this stage we will perhaps pause for a moment to observe that which is most preeminent and obvious that this God is a God of power he is a God of power now the psalmist says in one place we will talk of thy power now if God is not a God of power he is not a God to you is he because there have been so many occasions when you have needed God to be a God of power a God of power when you have been sinking when lower and lower

[48 : 18] I every day fell he stretched forth his power and stashed me from hell is that is the God that is able to do that your God I believe I can say he's my God I've needed his power so many times power to snatch me from hell you see the self-righteous people those that are trusting in their own works and salvation well they left that behind a long time ago but you know Satan is unrelenting Satan is ever on the watch tower you need to be too on your watch tower what's he trying to do well if God doesn't prevent he will bring you to the brink of hell again oh yes he will don't get deceived by the thought well I've been there once I've delivered that's behind me so it may be if it is the will of

God but let us not forget this that God can soon withdraw his power in order to manifest his greater power how easily we may succumb to Satan if God withdraw his power but if God has withdrawn his power just for a period it is only to demonstrate his greater power it is only to show you this God is our God who is able to save unto the uttermost God if you look back some of you can look back a good many years to the time when you first believed to believe and you believed then that salvation was of

God and you believed that perhaps salvation was of the Lord like Jonah did may I ask if you believe in the same way now have you not learned something of the greatness of that salvation the salvation was the same what you believed in hasn't altered at all but your feelings about it have by comparison God's salvation now is exceedingly great compared with what it was then and then you thought it was great but now the years have passed you've come in contact with the hosts that rise up the temptations that appear the distresses that abound sometimes sometimes you thought you would be overwhelmed the psalmist speaks of it what a good experience that a psalmist had he says from the end of the earth will I cry unto thee when my heart is overwhelmed but he did know where to look you see

God was the strength of his heart God was the strength of his faith God was the strength of his hope and then therefore he says lead me to the rock that is higher than I for this God is our God who is a God of power that is he is able to save to the uttermost does someone say will that power extend to me what are you then what kind of a person are you that you should raise such a question as that a limping beggar clothed in rags forsaken and forlorn and of the outcast of

Israel yet even those that were ready to perish in the land of Assyria as well as the outcast of Israel heard the gospel trumpet and they came and rejoiced in the Lord God and it was all of grace and it was by the power of God's grace and may we conclude this discourse by referring to one good man in the hymn book hark hell the gospel trumpet sounds christ and the free grace therein abounds free grace to such as sinners be who are compassed with hosts of enemies and if free grace why not for thee our God is a

[54 : 31] God of power why not for thee the savior died and by his blood brought rebel sinners near to God he died to set the captives free and if my why my soul why not for thee we will leave it this evening Thank you.