

Thoughts From Other Minds:

Verse 1. "I will love thee, O Lord." With strong, hearty affection will I cling to thee; as a child to its parent, or a spouse to her husband. The word is intensely forcible, the love is of the deepest kind. "I will love heartily, with my inmost bowels." Here is a fixed resolution to abide in the nearest and most intimate union with the Most High. Our triune God deserves the warmest love of all our hearts. Father, Son and Spirit have each a claim upon our love. The solemn purpose never to cease loving naturally springs from present fervour of affection. It is wrong to make rash resolutions, but this when made in the strength of God is most wise and fitting. "My strength." Our God is the strength of our life, our graces, our works, our hopes, our conflicts, our victories. This verse is not found in 2 Samuel 22, and is a most precious addition, placed above all and after all to form the pinnacle of the temple, the apex of the pyramid. Love is still the crowning grace.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

Verse 1. "I will love thee, O Lord." The word whereby the psalmist expresseth his entire affection To give evidence of his entire and ardent love of God, he oft professeth his wonderful great love to God's commandments, whereof he saith with admiration, "Oh, how I love thy law! I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. I love them exceedingly" (Ps 119:97, 127, 167); ... — William Gouge, 1575-1653.

Verse 1. "I will love thee." Intimately as a mother loves the child that comes out of her womb.—Westminster Assembly's Annotations, 1651.

C H Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, commentary on Psalm 18:1.

1. An unusual word, used only here, opens the first verse. Since it does imply a love of a very tender sort, we follow Luther's lead in translating: "I dearly love Thee." Who would not love God after having experienced so many and strong tokens of His favour? Then follow terms that are expressive of the rich understanding of God and the richness of His being, terms which a loving ingenuity loves to multiply, still feeling that it cannot exhaust the wealth of the divine Being.

2. The first word rendered "rock" might have been rendered "crag" as it is by some interpreters since a prominent single portion of rock is meant, on which a man may take refuge and stand far above the reach of his enemies. Among the many figurative terms there is one that is nonfigurative— "my deliverer." All expressions used convey the thought of safety, protection, and deliverance, with varied shades of colour. All these again have as a central core the ancient title of God 'el, "the Strong One." This is obviously a case where the mouth speaketh out of the fullness of the heart.

H C Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms*, pp. 164-165.

Camperdown — Terang Presbyterian Church

11 January 2015

Sermon: "*Loving the Lord our Deliverer*" (text: Psalm 18:1)

Scripture: Psalm 18, heading to v. 19, verses 20-50

Hymns: (Rejoice!)

6 O Lord you are my God and king
466 Jesus call us o'er the tumult
521 Christian do you hear the Lord?
505 I love the Lord, His strength is mine

Sermon Notes

Introduction: Psalm 18 must be important, for it is repeated in 2 Samuel 22—but without 'for the director of music' and 'of David the servant of the Lord' in the heading, and without the verse that is our text this morning. Why?

1. 'For the director of public music' indicate that was for public singing—and so we should expect it to have something to say to us, and something for us to say.
2. Perhaps the historian felt that a personal declaration of love for the Lord was out of place in a history—or perhaps when David included it in the psalms his heart was thrilled as he remembered, and he added to it 'I love you, O Lord, my strength.'
3. David's calling himself 'the servant of the Lord' points to him as a type of the Servant (Isa 42:1); it is important because it speaks of His victories (cf. Rom 15:8-9).

1. True of David, the servant of the Lord

Our text was true of David himself; the Lord had done great things for him, and he affirms: "I love you, O Lord, my strength." Or your version might have, "I will love you, O Lord, my strength." Both are possible, for the verb indicates an action not finished; David loves the Lord, and he intends to keep on loving him!

The word 'love' is a very strong word (see Thoughts From Other Minds); how did David learn to love the Lord in this deep, earnest, passionate way? Through the troubles through which he had brought him, as summarised is vs. 2 and 3, and as spelled out in the rest of the psalm.

No doubt David loved the Lord because he knew him as a forgiving God, the God who had made him one of his saints, but he loved him especially because he had delivered him from evil and had brought him safely through all his troubles.

Surely David wondered why, if the Lord wanted him as king of his people, he had to endure much opposition from Saul, and why, if he was to lead his people into peace and prosperity, it had to be by victory over powerful and aggressive enemies like the Philistines—but it was that he might learn to love him more deeply!

Perhaps you, my friend, are going through deep trouble—or maybe you will before the year is out, and you, too, will ask, "Why me, O Lord?" Then remember

David; your troubles too, will work for your good as you love him as you could never have loved him without your unwanted troubles.

The Lord was David's God in whom he took refuge [trusted]; trusting God is the great theme of the Bible; it's where our first parents went wrong; it's where we are reconciled to God, as we trust in Jesus his Son; it's the way to please God, the way of blessedness: 'trust and obey' is the way of true happiness.

David's situation was desperate—he felt death and destruction coming upon him; helpless, he cried out to the Lord—and he heard him, and intervened, perhaps with a great thunderstorm, to save him from Saul, who was hunting him down to kill him; he rescued him, and brought him into a safe place (vs. 16-19).

The Lord made David king—but then he was attacked by the Philistines (2 Sam 4:17) and by other nations around about; again David trusted in the Lord, and the Lord delivered him and gave him victory over them—and in this psalm he gives the glory to the Lord, and reflecting on this love for him, affirms his love for the Lord.

2. True of all who serve the Lord

The Lord always delivers, but not always as he delivered David. Jesus was cried out to God, and was heard (Heb 5:7) - but was not delivered from dying; his deliverance from death was by resurrection. His victorious reign is as one raised from the dead, and his reign will be consummated at his coming (1 Cor 15:26-27).

Unlike David, our enemies are not flesh and blood; yes, we might be in physical danger; persons may be our enemies; but our real enemies who can do us harm are spiritual, the world, the flesh and the devil; if our trust is in the Lord, he will deliver us from all that could do us real damage, to turn us from him to eternal death.

Death is the last enemy, but it won't have the last word (1 Thess 4:16-18). The Lord has promised us deliverance, but not an earthly kingdom; he may deliver us and heal us, or he may not; he may deliver us by keeping us strong in faith through sickness, suffering, persecution, destitution and death in a hostile world.

However, he does not deliver all who call on him—some of David's enemies called on the Lord, and he did not answer. They were rebels against the Lord because they were enemies of David, his appointed king. If he is to hear us, we must first submit to Jesus, the Son of God who died on the cross for sinners.

It's not enough to merely use the right words—we must submit from the heart to him as Lord (Matt 7:21). David understood this (Ps. 18:20ff); he wasn't claiming perfection, but he had obeyed the Lord; he had not murdered Saul—and so the Lord was faithful to him, and delivered him from all his enemies.

The Lord is not there for our convenience, to be ignored or defied except when we need him. We must make him our Lord by receiving Jesus his Son, to trust and obey him; then we may call upon him as our Lord, and he will deliver us even from death itself; then in heaven we will remember, and declare our love for him.

My Notes:

Questions for Reflection:

1. How does understanding David's experience that led to his declaring his deep love for the Lord in Psalm 18 help us when we find ourselves in dire straits?
2. David declares that the Lord is his refuge, or trust. Reflect on the importance of trust / faith in the scriptures. What does it mean to say that our safety is not in the strength of our faith, but in the object of our faith? What is the connection between 'trust' and 'obey'?
3. Outline from the two main sections of psalm 18 the two stages of the Lord's saving David from all his enemies; compare this with the history as in 1 and 2 Samuel. What does David mean when he says that the Lord has rewarded him according to his righteousness, according to the cleanness of his hands? (Ps 18:20, 24). What does this suggest about the importance of obedience in connection with the fulfilment of God's promises?
4. How does the way this psalm was fulfilled in Jesus' experience help us help us as New Covenant believers understand how the Lord might answer us and deliver us from all our enemies?
5. How is it that some called on the Lord, and he did not answer them? (v. 41) How can we avoid being like them?