



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Scripture: Psalm 118: 1-28

Summer 2024

"Up From The Grave"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth, and good morning. It's good to be back in the pulpit with all of you and look at this great Psalm, Psalm 118. This is a great Psalm, and I'm going to read all of it, even though it's a very long Psalm. And you'll recognize some of the text in it, text that the Lord Jesus used, indicating to us that it's really about Him ultimately. It's a great Psalm of deliverance. Psalm 118, beginning with verse 1;

**118** Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;

For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

<sup>2</sup> Oh let Israel say,

"His lovingkindness is everlasting."

<sup>3</sup> Oh let the house of Aaron say,

"His lovingkindness is everlasting."

<sup>4</sup> Oh let those who fear the LORD say,

"His lovingkindness is everlasting."

*(Now, 'That sets the stage', so to speak, for the great deliverance he will speak about in the Psalm. And then he'll come, in verse 22, to a great reversal of fortunes in this deliverance. Now, verse 5),*

<sup>5</sup> From *my* distress I called upon the LORD;

The Lord answered me *and set me* in a large place.

<sup>6</sup> The LORD is for me; I will not fear;

What can man do to me?

<sup>7</sup> The LORD is for me among those who help me;

Therefore I will look *with satisfaction* on those who hate me.

<sup>8</sup> It is better to take refuge in the LORD

Than to trust in man.

<sup>9</sup> It is better to take refuge in the LORD

Than to trust in princes.

<sup>10</sup> All nations surrounded me;

In the name of the LORD I will surely cut them off.

<sup>11</sup> They surrounded me, yes, they surrounded me;

In the name of the LORD I will surely cut them off.

<sup>12</sup> They surrounded me like bees;

They were extinguished as a fire of thorns;

In the name of the LORD I will surely cut them off.

<sup>13</sup> You pushed me violently so that I was falling,

But the LORD helped me.

<sup>14</sup> The LORD is my strength and song,

And He has become my salvation.

<sup>15</sup> The sound of joyful shouting and salvation is in the tents of the righteous;

The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.

<sup>16</sup> The right hand of the LORD is exalted;

The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.

<sup>17</sup> I will not die, but live,

And tell of the works of the LORD.

<sup>18</sup> The LORD has disciplined me severely,

But He has not given me over to death.

<sup>19</sup> Open to me the gates of righteousness;

I shall enter through them, I shall give thanks to the LORD.

<sup>20</sup> This is the gate of the LORD;

The righteous will enter through it.

<sup>21</sup> I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me,

And You have become my salvation.

<sup>22</sup> The stone which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief corner *stone*.

<sup>23</sup> This is the LORD's doing;

It is marvelous in our eyes.

<sup>24</sup> This is the day which the LORD has made;

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

<sup>25</sup> O LORD, do save, we beseech You;

O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity!

<sup>26</sup> Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD;

We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.

<sup>27</sup> The LORD is God, and He has given us light;

Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.

<sup>28</sup> You are my God, and I give thanks to You;

*You are* my God, I extol You.

<sup>29</sup> Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;

For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Psalm 118: 1-29

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank You for this morning, this opportunity to be together and worship You with Your people—and do so around this Psalm, this great Psalm that recalls a great deliverance that took place for the psalmist. But a prophetic one because it looks

forward to Your Son and the deliverance that You brought about in Him through the cross and the resurrection; the deliverance that affects us as well because through the cross we have been delivered from sin and death, and the devil.

You've given us new life, for the price has been paid. And You demonstrated that You accepted the sacrifice that paid that price by raising Your Son from the dead; and we live in the light of that. We live in this new life, *'Resurrection Life!'*, because we have a living Savior; and we thank You for Him. We thank You for Your sovereign grace that brought about this great eternal plan of salvation, and we thank You that we're here to reflect upon these things in this great Psalm.

So bless us LORD, spiritually—build us up in the faith. And we pray that You would bless us materially as well. We need Your blessing in the material things of life, as well as in the spiritual things. Some are recovering from serious procedures, and we pray You'd bless that continued recovery.

This life is short—it is "like a sigh." (Ps 90:9). We're "just a vapor." (Jas 4:14). What a glorious thing to know the Savior and to know that our future is *eternal*—it is certain. And we're reminded of the basis of all of that—it's the way our Psalm begins: It's Your *"lovingkindness"*, Your faithful love, Your grace. We thank You for that, LORD. May You be glorified in this hour. May we be built up in the faith, we look to You to bless us in that way; and we pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

*(Message)* I like adventure. I like to read about adventure though, much more than experience it. *[Laughter]* Especially one story I read relatively recently about a scientist in 2014 who fell 70 feet into a narrow crevasse near Mt. Everest. He was hiking over a glacier when the ice gave way and he fell in, bouncing off the sides until, miraculously, he landed on a chunk of ice that preserved him from falling deeper into the abyss. Amazingly, using an ice axe, he managed with smashed face and broken bones to gradually climb out of what he called, "his own grave".

Well the psalmist tells a similar story in Psalm 118, of being rescued out of 'a narrow place,' and put in 'a broad place'. So if you're claustrophobic, this is your Psalm—it's all about deliverance.

It is the last of what is called the "Hallel Psalms", Psalm 113 through Psalm 118: Psalms of praise, (*hallel*), and thanksgiving that were sung at the Passover meal. Verse 26 was recited by the crowd at the Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday; "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD." After telling the Pharisees a parable, in Mark chapter 12, Jesus quoted our verse 22 of Himself;

"The stone which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief corner *stone*."

So while this is a Psalm about the LORD rescuing the psalmist personally, and Israel as a nation, more importantly it is about Christ, about His rejection by the nation and deliverance by the Father. And in all of that is about deliverance and salvation for the LORD's people.

Now, we see the basis of our hope of that deliverance, *[the reason why we can hope in the prophecies that were coming if we were an Old Testament saint, and the reason we can not only look back on the cross of Christ and know the certainty of the salvation that occurred there, but also the certainty of salvation that will occur in our lives daily]*, is based on the first verses of this Psalm.

It begins with instruction for Israel to, 'Give thanks for the LORD's goodness and His faithfulness.' Verse 1,

"Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;  
For His lovingkindness is everlasting."

And then he repeats that in the next three verses;

"Oh let Israel say,  
'His lovingkindness is everlasting.' " (vs2).

"Oh let the house of Aaron say,  
'His lovingkindness is everlasting.' " (vs3).

"Oh let those who fear the LORD say,  
'His lovingkindness is everlasting.' " (vs4).

Four times that word, "*lovingkindness*", is stated. Each time it's the last word of the verse, which is a way of emphasizing it. Emphasis is placed on a word, sometimes in Scripture, by putting it first in the sentence—but also by putting it last in the sentence; and that's what we have here. Four times "*lovingkindness*" is stated—and it's emphasized, "His lovingkindness is everlasting."

That word, "*lovingkindness*", is a very important word in the Hebrew text. It's the word "*chesed*"—you've heard it pronounced many times. (It's kind of like '*agape*' in Greek in the New Testament.) It's a very important word in the Old Testament because it describes God's love for His people. Not for the world, but for His people—His special love for them.

This word is broad in its meaning: It's been translated as *lovingkindness*, *steadfast love*, *faithfulness*, and *loving faithfulness*. It's also an expression of God's character; and it is the basis of His relationship with Israel, and has been called therefore, '*covenantal love*'. (Derek Kidner compared it to the love that is in a marriage relationship.)

He is faithful to His people, and He's faithful to His Word, to His promises, so when the psalmist wrote, "His lovingkindness...", for Israel, (for the Jews), "...is everlasting", (vs1), we might ask, 'How long is that love and faithfulness for them?' And the answer is given here: 'It's forever!', and showing Israel, showing the Jewish people, that they have a future. It's Hosea chapter 11, verse 8, "How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I surrender you, O Israel?" He can't; that's *chesed*. That's *loving-kindness*.

Now, they are under discipline in this age and we see that clearly explained in Romans chapter 11; their branches have been "broken off" and broken out of the olive tree. (see verses 17-24). But that passage has the great promise, in verse 26, "...and so all Israel will be saved...". And as Paul then wrote in verse 29, "...the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable..." for Israel, and for the church—for all God's people.

And praise the LORD for that, because if He could cast off Israel after making promises to them, His glorious promises all through the Old Testament, then He could do that with us as well. But He won't—because He can't. He is faithful to His Word.

That's *lovingkindness*, and it's the basis of confidence this Psalm is built on—and the reason the psalmist called the nation to worship the LORD, to, "Give thanks...". (vs1). The LORD is reliable; His promises are sure. He always keeps His Word, and that's the guarantee of the LORD's rescue when we are in distress. And so four times he has made this statement, ("His lovingkindness is everlasting"), at the very outset that gives us that assurance.

The psalmist had, in fact, experienced that rescue, personally. He spoke of that in the next verses, verses 5 through 7. He had been 'in a tight place' when he cried out to the LORD for help. His identity isn't given, but it's clear from the rest of the Psalm that he was an important person. He was a prominent person, probably a king: Maybe David, 'the singer of Israel'; maybe Hezekiah, 'the righteous king.'

Some statements in the Psalm might suggest that Hezekiah wrote it. For example, in verse 17 and 18, he wrote of being "disciplined" and on the verge of death, but that, 'he would not die': "He has not given me over to death." (vs18b), the psalmist wrote.

In Isaiah 38, Hezekiah is described as, "mortally ill," and was told to put his house in order, "for you shall not live, but die." (vs1). But then he prayed, and the LORD heard his prayer, and He answered his prayer and graciously gave him '15 more years of life.' (vs5).

That incident may have happened in the days of the Assyrian king Sennacherib when he invaded Judah. But it's not certain that those events, Hezekiah's illness and that invasion, occurred at the same time. But you remember, Sennacherib carried out a long siege; and in his account of that campaign there in Judah, he recorded, 'As for Hezekiah, like a caged bird I shut up in Jerusalem his royal city'. He boasted of Hezekiah being shut up in his city and helpless there.

Well, that fits the description that the psalmist gives in verse 5 of his situation;  
"From *my* distress I called upon the LORD;"

That word, "*distress*", has the idea of '*constriction*'. It's used in Psalm 116, verse 3, of being in "the cords of death", literally—and of 'the straits', or 'distress', or 'terrors of Sheol', 'the grave'. He was bound; he was wrapped up; he was *constricted* when he called out to the LORD for help. Later, in verse 16, (Psalm 116), he wrote,  
"You have loosed my bonds", or, 'You have freed me from my chains'.

And here too, (Psalm 118), the psalmist is in a tight place—like the grave, or a deep crevasse, or to use Sennacherib's metaphor, 'a bird's cage'. He was helpless, when he, 'called on the LORD' for the LORD's help. And that's where his hope was. He knew that it's not in self, it's in the LORD. —And the LORD saved him:

"The LORD answered me *and set me* in a large place" (vs5b)

A spacious place. It's like being delivered from this tight, narrow, constricted place where he was being held, and set free in a pasture, a broad place where unbounded, he could breathe—and he was free. The LORD saved his life, and He loosed him. He made him free.

That reinforced the psalmist's confidence, and he boldly declared in verse 6,  
"The LORD is for me; I will not fear;  
What can man do to me?"



Now that verse is repeated in Hebrews chapter 13, verse 6, as the author comes to the end of that great epistle; "The LORD is for me. What can man do to me?"

That's the life of faith. But not faith in one's abilities, (that's 'self-confidence'). We should know our abilities, and we should act upon them—but never apart from the confidence that we can succeed only in the LORD's power and His will. Our confidence is in the LORD. The psalmist's confidence was in the LORD. And when He is for us, (and we know that He is for us), who is against us?... Well, it doesn't really matter. There are lots of people against us—they are arrayed against us and we see that pictured here in the Psalm. But it doesn't matter: 'If the LORD is for us', we are absolutely safe. We must hang on to Him and trust in Him.

Well, he stated that in the next verses, verses 8 and 9;

"It is better to take refuge in the LORD

Than to trust in man.

It is better to take refuge in the LORD

Than to trust in princes."

Now the LORD can use princes, just as He can use the abilities that we have, to deliver us and to work out a great plan for us. He can use princes, and men of influence and power, to protect His saints. He used Frederick the Wise, the German prince and 'Elector of Saxony', to protect Martin Luther. After the Diet of Worms, Luther's life was in danger. Frederick rescued him on his way home and gave him refuge in Wartburg Castle, where he stayed for about a year. There he worked translating the New Testament into German. Afterwards, as he returned to Wittenberg, (where he taught in the university there), Fredrick guaranteed his safety in the years that followed.

Luther loved Psalm 118 and he dedicated it to that prince, to Fredrick. He loved all the Psalms. He loved especially Psalm 46, which is the basis and the inspiration of his great hymn, *A Mighty Fortress is our God*. But he called Psalm 118, "My chosen Psalm."

He wrote, "It has saved me from many a pressing danger, from which nor emperor, nor kings, nor sages, nor saints could have saved me."

A person of faith doesn't rely on a prince or a politician. We rely on the LORD, knowing, "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD..." (Pro 21:1), '...and like channels of water, He turns it whichever way He wishes.' (ibid). He's sovereign; and this portion of the Psalm is reflecting that.

And it's a very personal part of the Psalm; you may have noticed that. The words, "I", and "me", are in contrast to the first verses of the Psalm that are collective: "Let Israel say", "Let the house of Aaron say." Well here, (vs5), it's, "I called...and the LORD answered me..." "The LORD is for me." (vs6).

The LORD is for all of His people, *collectively*. He's for all of them, but never impersonally. He is particularly interested in us individually. He knows each of us personally, (as if we were the only person in the world). And He rescues us directly, not only from dire straits, but from overwhelming odds.

And the scale of opposition to God's people is indicated in the situation that's described here in verse 10;

"All nations surrounded me;"

Here the importance of the psalmist is at least suggested—it would seem that he's an important person; he's 'the king in his capitol'. The word, "*surround*", is used four times in verses 10 through 12. The enemy brought all of its might against the man of God, and the LORD's people.

The threat was real. It was menacing and close; "They surrounded me like bees;" he said. (vs12). It was like 'a ring of fire and furious'. God's people often face that kind of situation and often get stung—and often get wounded. But the psalmist wrote,

"In the name of the LORD I will surely cut them off." (12c).

Again, not in his own name will he, "cut them off", not in his own power, in his own strength—but he's confident that he would "cut them off", 'in the LORD's name.'

It is His being, it is His power that guarantees this deliverance that the psalmist speaks of. He delivers!

And there are numerous examples of deliverance of this kind. We've seen some lately, in some of our studies: The Syrian army, you remember, surrounded the town of Dothan, in an attempt to capture the prophet Elisha. But the LORD's army of 'flaming chariots' surrounded Elisha, and Elisha captured the Syrian army.

And Sennacherib boasted that he had shut up Hezekiah in a cage, (but didn't tell the rest of the story). That was typical of these pagan kings; they would boast in their victories, but never mention their defeats. And the rest of the story is, Hezekiah prayed, and Isaiah prayed—and at night, the angel of the LORD struck down 185,000 Assyrians and Sennacherib retreated to Nineveh.

Revelation 20 describes: 'Great rebellion at the end of history, an army large, "like the sand of the seashore" will surround the camp of the saints. But not a hair on a saint's head will be touched—for in a moment, fire will come down from heaven and devour the rebels. Then comes the last judgment.' (Rev 20:7-10). It all shows the might of the LORD, the security of the saints, and why we can trust Him. He is God, the only God, Almighty God who holds the galaxies and the entire universe on the tip of His finger.

So in verse 14 he calls;

"The LORD is my strength and song,  
And He has become my salvation."

(Which is from 'The song of Moses' that was sung after God drowned the Egyptians in the Red Sea.) That event is the illustration of salvation throughout the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, and of the salvation accomplished by Christ at Calvary, where Satan was defeated, and Christ's people were set free.

The psalmist and the nation escaped the enemy, which God destroyed. I like the idea of Hezekiah, and the defeat of Sennacherib the Assyrian; but that's not certain, and it really could be any number of people and events.

In verses 15 through 18, the psalmist, again, likely a king, is joined in singing by all the people:

"The sound of joyful shouting and salvation is in the tents of the righteous;  
The right hand of the LORD does valiantly" (vs15).

(They celebrate, (they *shout!*), 'the LORD's right hand', which is the symbol of God's power—His strength, His might.)

"The right hand of the LORD is exalted;  
The right hand of the LORD does valiantly." (vs16)

(This, too, is from the song of Moses. They sang,

"Your right hand, O LORD, is majestic in power,  
...it shatters the enemy." (Exo 15:6).

And that happened here at Jerusalem, perhaps. )

Then in verse 17,

"I will not die, but live,  
And tell of the works of the LORD."

Later in Martin Luther's life, and was still under an imperial ban, (in fact a price, a bounty, was on his head), he left the safety of Saxony. (That was the only place where he was free to be. If he went outside of Saxony, he was 'fair game'.) But he left it and took refuge in Coburg Castle so that he could be available to counsel Melanchthon and his colleagues during the Diet of Augsburg—which is an important meeting.

It was dangerous, as I say. His life was in peril, but he inscribed this verse, verse 17, on the wall of the castle and continued doing his work: Continued translating the Bible into German, giving advice to Melanchthon and the others, and directing them in what they were doing. That verse, (17),

"I will not die, but live,  
And tell of the works of the LORD.",  
was a great confidence to Luther.

The righteous are in the LORD's hand, always, 'His strong right hand.' He is our castle; He is 'Our Mighty Fortress'. And so because of his deliverance, the king leads the congregation through "the gates of righteousness", as they're called, (vs19), into the temple to worship the LORD.

Verse 21,

"I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me,  
And You have become my salvation."

The righteous always give thanks for the LORD's help and salvation. And it comes often, more than we realize: Daily; maybe hourly. —Constantly, really, because we live and move in God, (and that's providence—and we should always be aware of providence.)

The English Puritan preacher, John Flavel, wrote a book titled, *The Mystery of Providence*. (Many of you have it, because Mike Black has made it available to you, and I recommend your reading of it.) I read it many years ago, but unfortunately I've forgotten most of it. But Mike has helped me; he sent me a text not too long ago, with a quote of Flavel's from that book, who wrote, "He who does not look for a providence misses a providence every day." And I suppose, when we get to heaven and we learn all that went on, we will realize that, (and not just every day but every minute—every moment of our existence). God Almighty is saving us from a disaster of some kind every day—maybe from an event on the highway, or the streets, or the city, or from some bacteria that fill the air. This is a theme I know I've been hitting on lately, but it's true and it's a good thing for us to realize. We live every day in a deep crevasse.

And we need to know that and understand that He saves us all the time...and be thankful! Not only does He save us all the time, His providences are the reason for blessing us all the time. There's the negative of being, 'delivered from', and there's the positive of that being, 'given'. And He gives us much, and blesses us. The righteous, the saints, they do this: They give thanks to Him. What we do, it's instinctive, but we need to be prodded very often.

The words of 'worship' and 'thanksgiving' that they gave are given in the next verses using the language of construction, of builders and architects, of important people who represent the nation. But they're given to show here the LORD's grace and power in reversing this king's trial. Verses 22 and 23,

"The stone which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief cornerstone.  
This is the LORD's doing;  
It is marvelous in our eyes."

This gives us new insight into the threat that the psalmist faced. It was not only an enemy surrounding the city, but an enemy within. "The builders" were men of power in Israel. This is a theme that we find in the Psalms: That of treachery, betrayal from powerful people within—trusted people.

David wrote of that in Psalm 41, verse 9,  
"Even my close friend in whom I trusted,  
who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me."

This is probably a reference to *Ahithophel*, David's close advisor, who betrayed him and joined the side of *Absalom* in the rebellion against David. The Lord quoted Psalm 41:9, in John 13, verse 18, of Judas, who ate the morsel that the Lord gave to him at the Passover meal, then left the room to betray Him; (interestingly, both Ahithophel and Judas hanged themselves).

Whatever the historical situation, the psalmist and nation were delivered from a desperate situation—enemies outside the city; and within. In fact, it was a great reversal of fortunes; the king that the enemies "rejected", (vs21), became, instead, "the chief cornerstone", (vs22), which is the most important stone in the foundation of a building. Now, it's not so much true today, but it was true in earlier times, that this was the first stone that was laid, the first stone set. All other stones are set in reference to it. So it

'binds the walls together', as it were. It determines the position of the entire structure of the building.

In Psalm 118, the king, (whoever he may be), is 'the cornerstone of the nation'. The king determined the spiritual direction of the kingdom: Either to righteousness or to wickedness, depending on the kind of king that he was. This king was a righteous king. The LORD rescued him from treachery, changed certain defeat into a marvelous delivery—and marvelous blessing to the nation. And, "This is the LORD's doing;" (vs23), the psalmist said. It was "marvelous", because it was completely unexpected to the psalmist. And the psalmist said it was a time, therefore, to rejoice in this great marvelous deliverance. That's that he instructed the people to do, verse 24,

"This is the day which the LORD has made  
Let us rejoice and be glad in it."

And that fact encouraged the people to pray for more blessing, continual blessing. Verse 25,

"O LORD, do save, we beseech You;  
O LORD, we beseech You, do send prosperity!"

It's not wrong to pray for prosperity: To pray for peace, and growth, and all the blessings of the LORD. And that's what they did pray for. They thanked Him for deliverance and prayed for more of that, confident that the One who had delivered them from a seemingly impossible situation would continue to bless, and deliver, and be faithful to them.

And because of that they confessed their trust in Him in the next verses, verses 26 and 27.

"Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD;  
We have blessed You from the house of the LORD.  
The LORD is God, and He has given us light;  
Bind the festal sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar."

Sacrifice is the appropriate form of worship and gratitude—and they gladly made this sacrifice that they describe.

The Psalm ends in a doxology—a glory to God. Verses 28 and 29,

"You are my God, and I give thanks to You;

You are my God. I extol You.

Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;

For His lovingkindness is everlasting."

(This last verse repeats the opening words of the Psalm in verse 1 and the last line of verse 3.)

He is always faithful and more than sufficient for our every need. Just as He delivered His ancient people, Israel, from Pharaoh, He is able to, and will, deliver us from the suffocatingly deep dark pit that we may find ourselves in.

He's already done that in the greatest way, through the work of His Son. This Psalm is very important in the New Testament as prophecy about Christ; about His trials and deliverance from death—and through that death, the salvation of His people.

I commented earlier that in Matthew 21, verse 42, and Mark 12, verse 10, and Luke chapter 20, the Lord quoted these verses, (Psa 118:22-23), of the chief priests and leaders of Jerusalem when they questioned His authority.

It was the last week of His life before the crucifixion. He had entered Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover in what is known as 'The Triumphal Entry'. The people, you'll remember, laid their coats in the road before the colt He rode, and shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD." (That's verse 26 of this Psalm.) They received Him as the Messiah; but the leaders were disturbed by that. In fact, Matthew ,(21:10), wrote that, "When He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred..." —it was troubled. So, 'the city of the great King did not receive its King.



And so, the next day after Christ had cleansed the temple; overturned the tables of the money changes and rebuked them for turning His Father's house into a robbers den, the priests and the elders, (who were very upset over that action), challenged His authority; 'Who gave You the authority to do that?' (Mat 21:23). They rejected Him.

And so,

"Jesus said to them, 'Did you never read in the Scriptures,

'The stone which the builders rejected,

This became the chief cornerstone;

This came about from the LORD,

And it is marvelous in our eyes.' " (Mat 21:42).

In Psalm 118, the immediate reference is to the king, (whoever he was), but ultimately, the reference is to Christ. He was rejected by the nation's leaders; but He became "the chief cornerstone." And Christ made that clear: The Psalm is about Him. When He quoted it to the Jewish leaders, that was His point; 'This is about Me. Have you not read this?!'

And that's how the apostles interpreted the Psalm. Peter told the court, (the Sanhedrin in Acts chapter 4, verses 10 and 11), that, 'God vindicated His Son.' Peter is speaking to the very men who crucified the Lord. This is Peter, who some 40 plus days earlier had denied the Lord three times, and now is speaking boldly to the very men that he was terrified of. (In fact, he was terrified of a little slave girl, but now he's a bold man.) This is the work of the Spirit of God in the life of Peter, (and the same Spirit's working in your life), but he quotes this passage of Psalm 118 in chapter 4 of Acts that, 'God vindicated His Son by raising Him from the dead', proving, "He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, *but* which became the chief cornerstone." (Acts 4:11).

The psalmist, said that "is marvelous." (vs23b), it was miraculous. It was, "the day the LORD has made", (vs24a), and that only the LORD could have made, because by the rejection and crucifixion of the Son of God, God the Father, saved His people. He turned

what appeared to be an inglorious defeat into a glorious victory, because by His death, the Lord gained life for His people.

The cross was the victory, because it was the *means* of atonement. And *atonement* is "satisfaction". God's justice was '*satisfied*' by Christ's death because it was the penalty for the sins of all of His people. He paid our debt on the cross, and God accepted it—accepted that payment. And the proof is that He raised His Son from the dead. The resurrection is the proof that the atonement has been accepted and has been effective.

It is effective—and the proof is that He raised His Son out of the deepest, darkest, coldest crevasse of all, the grave; and raised Him up, not only alive, (like Lazarus was alive), but glorified and triumphant.

And 40 days later He ascended into heaven and He was seated at the Father's right hand. We have a living Savior. And because He was resurrected, you and I, and every believer in Jesus Christ, will be resurrected. That's our future. That's certain. That's what we look forward to: We are triumphant! "We are more than conquerors!", (Rom 8:37).

In the meantime we live in this world, this fallen world; and we live with bodies that are not yet glorified. And we suffer the issues of life as are typical of this fallen world. But, in this life, we have new life. "All things are...new", Paul said. (2Cor 5:17).

So, Paul wrote in Ephesians chapter 2, verse 20, that we are of 'the household of God', "having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone." He gives unity and precision to the church and to the individual lives of Christians. We have fellowship with Him and with one another because we are in Christ and joined to Him—and in being joined to Him, we are joined to one another. We have His life in us—and through the work of the Holy Spirit we are becoming more and more like Him. That's the goal of sanctification—that we become Christlike.

The day of salvation is the LORD'S doing, and marvelous.

It's the day He made and reason to rejoice and be glad and confess;

You are my God, and I give thanks to You;

For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

He is our deliverer, our Savior;

He saved us from the penalty of sin;

He is saving us presently from the power of sin and life's difficulties;

And He will save us from the very presence of sin and all difficulty;

And give us glory beyond imagination!

*(A psalm of DD)*

So, we are to confess our faith in Him; this is what the psalmist told the people to do: To thank Him, and praise Him always. That's what saints do. That's what believers do—and only saints do that.

But you must be a believer in Jesus Christ to be a saint. If you've not believed in Christ, and received His salvation and eternal life, you're not His. You are lost, and you're in peril. Isaiah said of death, (Isa 5:14), "Sheol has enlarged its throat and opened its mouth..." —and it's open for you. That's a deep pit, a bottomless pit from which there is no escape.

But Christ is the Savior; He saves all who come to Him. So come to Christ; trust in Him. He receives all who do, and in doing that you will have life forever. May God help you to do that.

And you who have, (I hope it's everybody here), Rejoice! And be thankful!

*(Closing prayer)* Father, we do praise You and thank You for Your mercy, which occurred at the cross at great cost to You, but paid our debt—which is more than we

could afford. We would never be able to pay that; but You delivered us, You saved us.  
We thank You.

Make us grateful. And may we have thankful hearts all day, every day, rejoicing in the salvation You've given us, and the deliverances we experience all the time and are not even aware of. Thank You for Your mercy and Your grace.

Now the LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. In Christ's name. Amen.

*(End of Audio)*