

The Lord Is My Rock and Praise

Psalm 71. Last time it was Psalm 70. It was a little shorter.

This one's a little longer. Lots of good stuff in it. Let us listen intently to the Word of God, Psalm 71.

And you, O Lord, I put my trust. Let me never be put to shame. Deliver me in your righteousness, and cause me to escape.

Incline your ear to me, and save me. Be my strong refuge, to which I may resort continually. You have given the commandment to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress.

Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man. For you are my hope, O Lord God. You are my trust for my youth.

By you I have been upheld from birth. You are he who took me out of my mother's womb. My praise shall be continually of you.

I have become as a wonder to many, but you are my strong refuge. Let my mouth be filled with your praise and with your glory all the day. Do not cast me off in the time of old age.

Do not forsake me when my strength fails, for my enemies speak against me. Those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together, saying, God has forsaken him. Pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver him.

O God, do not be far from me. O my God, make haste to help me. Let them be confounded and consumed who are adversaries of my life.

Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor who seek my hurt. But I will hope continually, and I will praise you yet more and more. My mouth shall tell of your righteousness and your salvation all the day, for I do not know their limits.

I will go in the strength of the Lord God. I will make mention of your righteousness and of yours only. O God, you have taught me from my youth, and to this day I declare your wondrous works.

Now also, when I am old and gray-headed, O God, do not forsake me till I declare your strength to this generation, your power to everyone who is to come. Also, your righteousness, O God, is very high. You have done great things, O God, who is like you.

You who have shown me great and severe troubles shall revive me again and bring me up again from the depths of the earth. You shall increase my greatness and comfort me on every side. Also, with the Luth, I will praise you and your faithfulness, O my God.

To you I will sing with the harpo, holy one of Israel. My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to you of my soul, which you have redeemed. My tongue also shall talk of your

righteousness all the day long, for they are confounded, for they are brought to shame who seek my hurt.

Let us pray. And this psalm, God, a psalm of praise and adoration, as well as a plea that you are His rock, our God, may it be our song, adoration, and a plea that you are our rock and our fortress and our deliverer for our troubles and our difficulties. May we put our trust in you anew, Lord, as the psalmist does here in the very first verse.

In you, O Lord, I put my trust, which here is what we are all called as believers, to trust and to rely and cling to you as our Savior. Preserve us, therefore, Lord, in spite of our weaknesses and our sins, that we will continue to trust you all the days of our life. Amen.

The wonderful psalm here has many memorable lines and phrases I hope will comfort us in our time of need. Whether you have troubles at home or haters at work, the psalm points us to our God in heaven as our deliverer and help, our rock. It is a good reminder to turn our hearts again unto the Lord and His continued work for us.

The psalmist also points to the Lord, the Lord and His work, and our past, His past as a young man, as a source of confidence for the future, that He was our rock and our younger years as well, and continues to be our source of security even now in our older years. These are important themes here that we will discuss, so let's learn a little more and be encouraged here from this psalm. The Lord is my rock, verses 1 through 13.

The Lord Is My Rock

He says a number of things that could have been a good title here, but that is one that echoes, I think, in our ears. In you, O Lord, I put my trust. Why? Because God is His rock.

He is the fortress. He is the foundation. He is the security of His faith and of His hope, of His trust.

This is why He is able to do this. This is why it's an important theme. Although not mentioned in the very verse 1, but mentioned in verse 3 that God is the rock and fortress, that's why He could put trust in Him.

Although He speaks in the first person, to be sure, I put my trust, we know it's not about Him and His faith, however small or great, nor is it about us and our faith, however small or great. As I mentioned this morning, that baptism expresses primarily the work of God, not our response to that work, which is, of course, expressed in our confession either before as an adult or later on in life, after our baptism as a child. That's secondary to the significance of the baptism.

And so here, although He has to speak in the first person because it's about His concerns, He's really thinking and focusing upon God. Let me not be ashamed, He says. Let me never be put to shame.

Deliver me in your righteousness and cause me to escape. That is the shame of the hardships and the woes and the troubles that He goes through, the shame that His enemies would perhaps put upon Him for mocking Him, that your God is not going to save you, as you read in Psalm 70, for example. This prayer for deliverance from woes, like most Psalms, a lot of details are missing.

What exactly are His problems? What exactly is going on? What is troubling David here? Is it David as David only, himself, or David as a king, therefore affecting his office and the people around him and his nation? What exactly is the trouble? We don't know often. Here it's serious enough, and a few verses later we read, "...and those who lie and wait for my life take counsel together." That's pretty significant. For his life.

They wish to take him down, they wish to kill him, and so they conspire together to do just that. But to resist and to stand firm against this, he calls out to the Lord, "...incline your ear to me, save me." Verse 2, using the wonderful picture there, "...as a child to a father, come down to me, lend me your ear, God, I wish to speak to you, I'm crying out for help. Be my strong refuge." Verse 3, "...to which I may resort continually.

You have given commandment to save me, you are my rock and my fortress." Implying I have nowhere else to go, no other security. Whatever situation he finds himself in, he cannot rely upon man, but he must rely upon God Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. That's the picture of a rock, of a mighty fortress, of the mighty Rocky Mountains, we would think today.

They never seem to move. Nothing shakes them. Generations pass by, thousands of years, and nothing seems to change at all.

That's the imagery here of a rock and of a fortress that stands firm in the midst of all the chaos of this world and sin and wickedness around it. And a beautiful picture in which we describe our hope and trust in Jesus, our Lord and Redeemer. And he continues on, of course, here in the first main point.

Secondly here, a life of faith, verses 5 through 9 alike, "...deliver me, O God," verse 4, "...out of the hand of the wicked." There he specifies what he wants. These men who are unrighteous and cruel. "...for you are my hope, O Lord God.

You are my trust from my youth." Hope is a part of the Old Testament holiness, the believers themselves. And when I think of hope, when I hear that word, I often think of the New Testament passage in the book of Hebrews. Hebrews 11, verse 1. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

So often it's described in systematic theology as the forward-looking aspect of faith, hoping for the future, hoping for the work of Christ to redeem us further, as it were, in our sanctification, to deliver us from difficulty or the resurrection of the body, these things that haven't occurred yet in our life. And we all need to look forward to what our eyes cannot see. That's hope.

Hope in the context of a confidence, not hope in the way sometimes we think of the phrase, at least in my experience, I hope and pray that my family is doing what they promised they're going to say they're going to do, with the implication being it's probably not going to happen, I'm not sure. That's not what the idea of hope here is. It's another way of describing faith, faith in the future, the trust that it's going to occur, and that's where I'm going to put my reliance.

The coming of Jesus in all his glory especially is what we long for. Hope, we see here in particular, is parallel to trust, for you are my hope, O Lord God, you are my trust from my youth. So he repeats himself but expands it a little further, not just my hope and my trust, clearly in parallel, O Lord, but also from my youth.

So his picture of help, of faith in God Almighty, is not only for the salvation of a soul, which clearly David has and believes, but for immediate problems in his life as a king, as a general in fighting the Philistines, for example. This hope and trust is in God in everyday activities. It's why I bring this up.

We can read these and it's fine to be speaking with respect to his soul, and I don't think he's always excluding that to be sure, but often his mind is dealing immediately with physical problems dealing around him. They want to take his life, they want to steal his body, if it were, and take it away from him so that he dies. But what's interesting here is he moves from I trust in God, but I trust in God, I rely upon him, I hope in him from my youth.

By you, verse 6, I have been upheld from birth. You are he who took me out of my mother's womb. I could have used that this morning preaching on baptism, right? That here, the quite opposite of how we often we hear in our circles as believers, at least again my experience, I know some of your experiences in this regard, that weird and the ordinary, not exciting conversion of household baptism just isn't enough, it seems.

I grew up with the opposite, of course, that special speakers were brought to the church, I don't know how many times, many times a year, talking about their life of drugs and trouble and how they found Jesus and everything changed for them. I'm not mocking this at all, brothers and sisters, what I'm pointing out is they are emphasizing the wrong thing at times, or at least they're emphasizing one thing and missing the other, which is it's okay to have a boring conversion. What's wrong with that? Everything's wonderful about that in many ways, because again, once you're converted, your life of drugs and of loose living and whatever else doesn't disappear, the effects are with you and it affects other people, we cannot deny that.

But if you have a regular upbringing, in God's grace, often those effects aren't especially bad, that bad, right? I remember listening to the radio many times and hearing narratives of conversions from pastors and the like, and one of the big ones that came up in the evenings in the 80s, you may recall, some of the older ones, unshackled. Nobody? Just me? Oh yeah, okay, I guess it was Moody Bible or something, Moody out of Chicago, and they would dramatize people's conversions. You'd call them up, you'd write a letter or something, I guess, back then, and you would send them your story and they would get some

professionals or semi-professionals, some Christians, to read your story in a very dramatized manner.

I know this because my family put their story in. I remember hearing this, I was so excited, I'm a teenager, this is great, my parents are on the radio. I didn't realize at the time, of course, there's exaggeration going on, because they want to make it so exciting.

Is it really exciting? Sometimes it is, sometimes, I think, often. In the case of David, it wasn't. He grew up in a covenant home as a Jewish child, circumcised, raised to learn the songs of God, the the teachings of God, the worship of God.

He didn't grow up a rebel, he didn't have all these problems. I'm sure he was still a sinner, right? He still disobeyed his parents somehow, some way, surely he did. But, you know, from the picture that we have, he did a lot of good things.

He was with his father, he was taking care of the animals, he was responsible, and he kept the faith. Why should we look down upon that? Why shouldn't that rather be exalted and expected and promoted? I think it should, and this is one of the texts for this, to remind us of this, that being reared in the covenant home and growing up never knowing a day of unbelief is a wonderful blessing, and we should celebrate that. And he even describes it being upheld in his birth, right? You have upheld me from birth.

You are he who took me out of my mother's womb. I was preserved by your providence and your special grace for your people, even from birth. Kept him alive.

So, not only spiritually, of course, but if you back up and you look at the physicality of it, how many children died over the thousands of years because it was dangerous to live in this world, and it is. They didn't have the kind of blessings and medical care that we have. You would have lots of kids and many kids would die.

He lived. He survived. He preserved through childhood as well, and he continues here in verse 7 and the like.

I have become as a wonder to many, but you are my strong refuge. There's that picture again of a fortress and a rock. Verse 8, let my mouth be filled with your praise and with your glory all the day.

Do not cast me off in the time of old age. Do not forsake me when my strength fails. And so, the desires of the psalmist here, asking for God to protect him and the like, is a laudable prayer, and he even mentions of his old age.

Do not cast me off in the time of old age, O Lord. Do not forsake me. He's crying out for help even when his old age comes upon him.

For my enemies speak against me, verse 10, and those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together. There's that verse. They wish to kill him.

They wish to take him out. We've read that in other psalms as well. That's what happened often in the springtime between the nations, as you know.

They would come out to battle and to fight, or the local Philistines or whatever else was the case here, or court intrigue. Terrible, terrible thing. His prayer here is that they would be confounded, and those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together, saying, God has forsaken him.

Pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver him. O God, do not be far from me. Let them be confounded and consumed, verse 13.

So that's his prayer. That's the resolve that he wants. He has a problem.

He comes to God. Where else is he going to go? Where else are we going to go? And we ought to pray that God would indeed remove the enemies of the church, remove problems in our life, especially if they are adversaries and we are innocent. Talked about this before.

You can be and have been innocent. There are many things you haven't done at all, and people hate you anyways. I wish to destroy your livelihood, your job, your position at work, or whatever the case is.

They take counsel together. Some of the details here we see of the kind of hatred they had towards him, that they lie in wait for his life. They take counsel together, in verse 10, saying, God has forsaken him.

The picture is he's left alone. He's got a weak spot. God isn't on his side.

We're going to come after him now. God has forsaken him, and none is there to deliver him. And so he is an easy prey.

David feels that, and so he knows God is with him, and that they are lying. They don't know what they're talking about. God will deliver him.

But sometimes it certainly feels that way. That in the midst of troubles in our life, the sins that we struggle against, or the problems, relational problems and the like, are again people who simply hate us for no good reason, and it feels like perhaps God has left us. He has forsaken us.

But that's just the devil whispering in your ear, as it were. It's just a lie. It's not true.

God do not be far from me. God make haste to help me. He asked for help, and help now, not later, because the matter is pressing, and he wants his enemy to be confounded, even consumed, brought to confusion, not for spite, as though he's just a petty man, but to protect David from lies and conspiracies, either as a private citizen or as a king, which is likely the case, that they would be covered with reproach, that is, brought to public shame for their attempt to take him out for trying to harm an innocent man.

This is just but a plea for justice. God may or may not give it to him, we know this. He may or may not give you justice, as it were, earthly justice, and you may have to suffer.

Christ talks about that in the Sermon on the Mount. Sometimes you just simply have to suffer and wait, but other times you may be able, by prayer, this is one thing we can always do, is pray for God to deliver us.

The Lord Is My Praise

The second point, the Lord is my praise, verses 14 to 24.

The first part, he emphasizes the problems and the troubles that he has and prays for deliverance. He mentions that over and over again, a number of times, that God would make haste, that God would protect him, that God would provide for him, and now he praises him, verses 14 and following, but I will hope continually and will praise you yet more and more. My mouth shall tell of your righteousness and your salvation all the day.

Praise and hope, verses 14 through 16 here, a persevering hope. I will hope continually. He doesn't stop giving up.

He believes something will happen eventually. He talks of God's deliverance there in verse 15. He's so happy that God will talk about the Lord's faithfulness.

My mouth shall tell of your righteousness. The word righteousness here, I know the first thing you're going to think of, because I would too for many years, is, well, he means God's law, God's moral perfection, your perfection, your righteous, your uprightness. Maybe we have another word for that one there.

But in this context, I believe, and sometimes that is certainly the case, that righteousness is shorthand for God being faithful to the covenant, upright, and fulfilling his promises to deliver his people. That's the picture here. You are righteous in the sense of you will deliver me as you said you would, and your salvation all the day, right? My mouth shall tell of your righteousness and your salvation all the day.

It's an upright salvation. It's a promise. You fulfilled it.

You are righteous in fulfilling the deliverance of your servant. That's the picture. And he mentions this a little later again in the Psalm, righteousness and God's therefore faithfulness, and he talks to whoever he can of these things.

My mouth shall tell of your righteousness. Who is he talking to? Well, to God, but I think he's going to talk to other people as well. He mentions it at the end where he'll sing praises and speak of the other generations that they may know the Lord.

In verse 18, until I declare your strength to this generation. So yes, he's speaking of God's righteousness to God, but I think he's also speaking to others. And of course, eventually writing it down in this psalm.

And so when we have deliverance, when we have praise, it isn't just for ourselves only often, although it may be privately, but we speak to one another. Look what God has done for me. How God has delivered and protected me from my own foolishness as an encouragement to one another and always to praise our Lord God Almighty.

And the good things that God has done for us and for David, I know the strength of the Lord God. I will make mention of your righteousness, of yours only, of your salvation, that is his deliverance from his troubles, his everyday troubles. He doesn't always have in mind here in the Psalms when he praises the Lord for miracles.

Although we read of a number of miracles, of course, in 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Samuel, but often, even in 1 and 2 Samuel, you'll see he has simple victories. He just goes to war, he fights, he has his men. They're very tactical, they're very smart, they flank the enemy, they deceive the enemy, and they kill them.

And of course, it's by God's bite, because God works through all things in history and in life in Providence. But it's not a miracle as such any more than you find out I did a good job on my presentation, on my job at work, and my boss was happy with me, I got a pay raise. Good, you did your work, you took your time, you paid attention, you learned what you need to learn.

It took effort, yes, but you praise God because he gave you the strength, he gave you the wisdom, he gave you the opportunity, so that providentially, through ordinary cause and effect, you are preserved from a bad co-worker who was lying about you, for example, and you showed him up, as it were, by giving a good presentation. Things like that. You could tell, and tell your children and others of these things.

Of the strength of the Lord God, and he speaks that language here, go in the strength of the Lord God. To go in the strength of the Lord God doesn't mean he somehow supernaturally becomes, you know, Andre the Giant or something, or some powerful strong guy, physically speaking. He means moral strength from God, the grace of God, to sustain him in his time of need, in his soul, but maybe even his body, of course, because our body is affected by worry and the like.

And I will make mention of your righteousness of yours alone. He says that again. The strength here, the strength of faith, comes from the mercy of God, or the strength of repentance comes from the love of Christ, the strength of perseverance by the Spirit of God within us.

Whatever that strength is, it is from our Lord and him. And so we should acknowledge this and thank him for this. Whether mental alertness, spiritual faith, or physical prowess, it all comes from him.

Life of praise, verses 17 to 18, O God, you have taught me from my youth, as to this day I declare your wondrous works. Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, do not forsake me. Hence a life of faith from my youth to my gray hair, or in my case, my whiting hair.

He means old age, of course, but God is always with him. And he continues to what? Declare your wondrous works, your strength, your power, your salvation, your righteousness, all these different attributes of God and the things that he's continued to do for David, for us, for you. Taught from my youth, verse 17, taught by what? How does God teach him? Not by impressions or whispering in his ears.

I had a conversation recently about this. It's the strangest thing hearing it from a minister about having impressions from the Spirit. Direct communication was his phrase.

Direct communication upon your soul. No, what we have here, like we read elsewhere, where David says, the Lord has taught me to fight, taught my strength, my right hand to use a sword, for example, or a bow, we read in the prior Psalms. He means providentially.

His father maybe taught him to use a bow, and then he becomes, you know, the servant of the King Saul, and the generals teach him how to use, or the sergeants at arms teach him how to use a sword. That's God directing providence to his advantage and giving him strength and skill sets and opportunities other people didn't have. That's what he means here.

God, you have taught me from my youth. How? Providentially, of God's power and control. We know and see.

That's why we have so many religions across the world. They recognize something beyond the material world. But, of course, it's twisted by sin.

Taught by his parents, obedience and love. Circumcised in the covenant, they apparently were faithful parents, by all accounts. Taught by the church, that of course in the Old Testament church was the priesthood in particular, and the sacrifices and the like.

Of course, any prophets perhaps he heard when he was younger, certainly when he was older. And we do the same with our children. We're supposed to instruct them and teach them to learn obedience, but also repentance from sinning, the trust in Jesus always.

And so our children, we pray, would grow up as we had this morning in my prayer for the most children, that they would always know our Lord and Savior. From being a child, a youth, a young person, until old age. That's a wonderful picture here of David.

And for us, old and believing, as I have in my notes here, David is up there in years apparently, still trusting and believing in God, crying out that God would be with him so that he could declare, there it is again, to sing forth, to pronounce, to declare, and ultimately to praise your strength to this generation, your power to everyone who is to come. He wants to tell others of what God has continued to do for him, as king, as shepherd boy when he was younger and the like, here in his old age as a king, and declare God's power and his mercy and his strength. He can declare your strength to this generation.

We can declare this strength as well to this generation, our generation of children and grandchildren, the power of God Almighty in our salvation, to praise him for the next

generation to learn of God. That's how the truth is passed on. It's generational, especially in the family, but not only.

Here he is, king, singing praises, writing Psalms so that the rest of the church could be edified by what God has done for him. And thus we have the history of singing, as you know, went over that in church history class, a Sunday school class, a number of things and details therein. And these are sung, we sing some of these things that they sung back then, the song of Ambrose and the like, echoing and reinforcing generation after generation that we are one in Christ, that we are one body of believers, and we share a same Lord and deliverer, and we can rejoice when others rejoice and mourn when others mourn.

That's the picture here of intergenerational continuity, both of the covenant and of our children, but especially of teaching and the practices of holy living that we want them to learn and others to learn as well. You, you who are gray-headed, that includes me now, don't be shy. Tell your story to others.

Tell your kids and your grandkids. Keep a journal so they can see God working through your life. They can see it is okay to have sometimes somewhat boring life, but it's, you know, it's your life and it is boring when you went through it.

I know, I know how that feels. And the kids will see it, and they will see that you're excited about it, and they will pick up on that excitement, especially when they're younger, because they want to imitate their parents. They see they do good things, they want to follow those good things at times.

And this is one way to do it. He says it over and over again with my mouth, with my lips. I will declare, I will praise, I will tell others, I will tell this generation, I'll tell my children and grandchildren, I'll tell whoever will listen, because God is good and he protects and preserves my soul and even my body.

Great deeds of a great God, verses 19 to 21. Also, your righteousness, O God, is very high, that is exalted up above. You who have done great things, O God, who is like you? Indeed, who is like our God and Savior? He has done great deeds, often a description here, or great things here in particular, of miracles, but not exclusively.

Many things God has done for David in his life, as we know, and the life of the kings, our lives, the life of the church. That's why I mentioned church history, the Waldusians, for example, and preserving them in spite of an entire empire, the Holy Roman Empire, excuse me, the Holy Empire of the Roman Catholic Church, trying to wipe them out there. France, Germany, Austria, and they survived in the northern parts of Italy and the Alps and the valleys, they specify, which are probably hard to get to over the mountains, to kind of get to the valleys.

Back in the 1100s and 1200s, God preserved and did wonderful things, and so going over history then, although they are dead and gone, they're gray-headed, it is now completely gone, we still learn from them, and we sure, I hope, get encouragement and strength from that, that God preserves his people, even in the hardest times, because those are very hard times indeed, when they were surrounded by enemies. The great deeds of our God is one

thing that we ought to rejoice and tell others and other generations, and this great question here, one of many parts of the Psalm 71 that we're probably familiar with, who is like you, O God? It's a rhetorical question, obviously, he knows the answer to that question, nobody is like him, there is no comparison to God Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, he who guides and directs all things to their final end and protects and upholds his people against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

There is nobody like him, the creator of all, the holy one who guides and preserves his people, none of the pagan gods, who are but mute idols without power, none of the modern gods of prosperity and science, as we've been hearing over and over again, so many things, like even from the 70s, it's the end of the world, and we're going to an ice age, I remember that, looking that up, as you can find all kinds of things now on the internet, they're just lies, unfortunately, but like in real life, find the original, I think it was Newsweek article, the ice age is coming, what?

And now the world's gonna melt, it was when I was in the 80s, and who knows, they don't know what they're talking about, God knows what he's talking about, and we trust in God.

The mission of God's providence, verse 20 to 21, you who have shown me great and severe troubles shall revive me again, so he relies upon him, and what's interesting here is, how does he describe his troubles, where do his difficulties come from, you who have shown me great and severe troubles from God himself, that is, he knows God's behind problems in his life, not in a culpable sense of a petty God, like the pagan gods, who just like to throw difficulties at people, if you read the stories, that's what they like to do, but rather of a father who knows what's best for us, it's just like we know a child who's like.

I don't want to be spanked, like, well, I'm sorry, that's good for you, I know it's good for you, and God knows what's good for us. Sometimes what's good for us is to have severe troubles and difficulties, because we can be very stubborn at times, and very difficult, and he recognizes this, he admits that God is in charge, and because the same God is in charge, and not random events, not Satan or the will of men, but God, and so God can revive him, just as he had brought him low, like he brought Job low, and revive him again.

That is to wake him up spiritually, in particular, his soul, his depression, to bring me up from the depths of the earth, where he felt like he fell into a hole, into the center of the earth, that's how bad, down in the mouth as we say sometimes, he felt, and God will comfort him instead, you shall increase my greatness, that is his protection in a greater situation than a sad situation, and comfort me on every side, so that he's no longer depressed, he's no longer troubled, or whatever the particular difficulties that he had, and that's a prayer that we should have as well, a rejoicing in him, but also acknowledgement that he brings the troubles in our lives, they are guided by him for our good, but we can still ask for comfort, comfort of our hearts, comfort of our mind, that we no longer be troubled, and maybe that could be simply accepting the situation and knowing we cannot change it, and that's especially hard.

And lastly, after he recognizes God will dispose what is best for him in its providence, he sings praises to God verses 22 to 24, also with the lute I will praise you, in your faithfulness,

oh my God, to you I will sing with the harp, O Holy One of Israel, and he continues, my lips shall greatly rejoice, and my tongue shall talk of your righteousness, there's that theme again, in the latter part of verses 14 and following, speaking, my lips, my tongue, my praises, my singing, my lutes, and the like, praised with an instrument here.

David, as we know, speaks of the harp, so apparently he plays the harp and the lute, he was quite talented, talented enough to write Psalms, yes they're inspired, we know, but doesn't change the fact that I think he was talented, God worked through, I think, a natural ability, he was a smart enough man, he was a tactician, as a general, and many things he has shown that he is well gifted by the Spirit of God, before he even had, as it were, special work of the Holy Spirit upon him, supernatural work, as the case may be.

The instruments here, as we know, were used a number of times during the time of Moses, as well as before and after, Exodus 15 20, for example, so this is before, before the giving of the law, they are there in the desert, they are rejoicing and delivering from Pharaoh, we read in Exodus 15 20, and then Mariam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after with timbrels and with dances, rejoicing and singing, sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously, the horse and its rider he has thrown into the sea, those who wish to conquer and destroy my people, God's people, and kill us.

They instead have drowned in the Red Sea, and she sings a song, and she uses the timbrel, and the like. Now, some of us play instruments, I know a number of you who play instruments, or have played instruments, someone like myself tried once the piano, my mother played the piano, she could play the flute as well, I tried, I guess I was age 12, there in Arvada, I remember the little house I lived in off of Lee Street, no, give me a pencil, give me a pen, or pencil, and paper, I prefer to draw, forget the instruments, I can't do it, especially that flute, trying to pucker your lips, that's crazy, we can't all play instruments, and maybe you're like, well maybe you could if you just trained enough, sorry, we all have a life, we all get through life, we get busy, and you have to prioritize, and we don't, aren't able, and other people can prioritize, good for them, they have a different kind of life than the rest of us

But one thing we all have, brothers and sisters, whether we have the talent to play an or not, as a natural instrument of our tongue and our lips, and that's what he speaks of here.

I will sing praises in the harp, verse 23, my lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to you, my tongue also, in my research on the singing of psalms, and spiritual songs, and scriptural songs, and church history, one of the ways they described this is the natural instrument they talk about, the natural instrument being our lips, it's like that's a nice way of putting it, as opposed to something artificial, that's natural, it's what God already gave us, we can all use it.

It takes a little more practice of course than just simply speaking, the one, like one step beyond just speaking, the lowest level of that kind of thing is like the Gregorian chant, right, kind of get a little rhythm there, and that's about the basic you can get, probably where I'm fitting there, but do it nevertheless, my grip, my lips, your lips, brothers and sisters, your

tongue, which is from lips to tongue here, in Hebraic fashion, should rejoice what God has done for you, be happy, sing praises throughout the week, not just on Sunday.

Find your favorite one, find your favorite psalm, don't forget the psalms, this is, yeah I'm not an exclusive psalmist singer, but boy I love the psalms, and we keep singing the psalms, never lose the psalms. They ought to be here and we sing them, praise be to God, because there's much good things there, it's a basic, as it were, foundational to have praise and honor before God, and they are here.

He gave them to us to use, singing here with a natural instrument that God has given us, a ready instrument of praise, brothers and sisters, let us do that, let us not hold back, let us not be embarrassed, let us thank Him, and talk of your righteousness all the day, verse 24, for they are confounded, that is His enemies, for they are brought to shame, that is those who wish to kill Him, remember, they want to take His life, and His response to that isn't God take their life, He could have, it would have been fair, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, justice, but here and these imprecations, right, these are slightly imprecations, God bring a reproach or curse upon them.

He doesn't say kill Him, He just says bring Him to shame, so He even holds back in that, doesn't He, and we ought to follow that example as well, often when it comes to enemies as especially, again, personal enemies upon us, and the hymns that we should sing should be faithful to the Word and the righteousness of God, as He says here, I shall talk of your righteousness, that is, He is going to sing praises that are faithful to the Word of God and not to man or his impressions and his thinking.

The Lord God of the Covenant is our stable foundation, brothers and sisters, our rock in time of need, and we should trust Him as well as praise Him, often when I use the word praise, I mean sing, to be thankful and to rejoice with our words before Him, and of course always to trust in Him for His righteousness and His strength and His power to deliver and has delivered us from sin and trouble, let us pray.

Father God above, help us to have joy, to use our lips and our tongue, and to sing praises to you, God, all the days of our life as opportunity arises, Lord God Almighty. We're thankful that we are able to do that here and that we have all the Psalms, God, translated and put to good tunes for us to sing praises to you all our days.

In your name alone we pray, by the blood of Jesus, amen. Let us stand.