

“Life Song” // 2 Samuel 22–23 // *The Life of David* #18¹

Announcement

What an amazing Easter weekend here at TSC. Did you know, more than 20k people attended a Summit Easter service last week here in the Triangle?

It’s never the numbers, though; it’s the individual stories we celebrate and that I can’t get over.

- At our Garner Campus we met a man who had been in a near fatal car crash who told us that God spoke to him in the hospital room and he and a friend came last weekend in obedience to that and both gave their lives to Christ last weekend.
- I heard of another woman who had been a committed atheist for 15 years who was invited by a member; she came in, heard the message, gave her life to Christ and this weekend she is in our Next Steps class.
- I know of another man who says he has been agnostic for over 30 years who is, this very weekend, getting baptized after receiving Jesus as his Savior.
- That’s why we do what we do, to come to know and love and worship and glorify Jesus ... and it never gets old--Amen, Summit?

¹ Works Consulted: Tim Chester, *1 Samuel For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God’s Word for You)*, The Good Book Company, September 15, 2014; John Sailhammer. *NIV Compact Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994); Jen Wilkin, [“David Sings his Story,”](#) a podcast session

All that continues this weekend. Last weekend I challenged some of you to make the decision to get baptized this weekend. We have over 70 ppl already scheduled to be baptized in response to that. And here’s the thing: many of you are going to join them--and you didn’t even know that when you came today. But we got you covered. We have everything you’re going to need to be baptized.

I’m going to give you a chance at the end of this message to get baptized if you never have. Baptism is supposed to be your first act of obedience after becoming a believer, a way of going public with your faith. We always compare it to the wedding ring ...

And for many of you, today is that day!

Introduction

2 Samuel 22–23, if you have your Bibles. We are nearing the end of the life of David, and what a life it has been! **Chapters 22–23 of Second Samuel** are David’s “last words” of sorts; David’s summation of his life, kingdom and ministry.

I always find “last words” (or attempts to summarize somebody’s life, or business, or mission, in a sentence) intriguing. Recently I saw a list with some really creative taglines that local businesses gave themselves:

posted to YouTube on May 23, 2019; Beth Moore, “Back Where He Belonged,” session taught with LifeWay, published in 2010; Skip Heitzig, [“2 Samuel 21–22,”](#) this sermon was preached at Calvary Church, and posted to YouTube on Nov 3, 2022; Skip Heitzig, “2 Samuel 23,” this sermon was preached at Calvary Church, and posted to YouTube on Dec 1, 2022.

- For example, a man named ‘Dave’ had a septic tank cleaning business and named it: *Dave’s Septic Services: We’re #1 in the #2 business*. Even better was the tagline on his septic tank removal truck: “Yesterday’s meals on wheels.”
- A local plumbing company chose the tagline: “We repair what your husband ‘fixed’.”

Sometimes the summation of one’s life comes in the form of ‘last words’:

- Elvis Presley’s (some of you may have seen the movie) last words at a press conference were, “I hope I haven’t bored you.” Which, if you know anything about his life, seems fitting²

Sometimes these life summations appear on tombstones:

- The epitaph on TV show host **Merv Griffin**’s tombstone reads: “I will not be right back after this message.”
- Here’s one from old Colonial New England. “Here lies my wife, I bid her goodbye; she rests in peace, and now so do I.” Ladies, does that seem mean? Well, here’s another one from a wife’s tombstone in New England: “Ann Margaret lived with her husband for 50 years and died confident in the hope of a better life ahead.”
- And finally, here’s one I love for its simplicity: “Here lies Ezekiel Aikle, Aged 112. The good die young.” You have to wonder who chose that?

In 2 Samuel 22–23, the editor of 2 Samuel uses a song that David wrote at a point earlier in his life to summarize David’s life. David

² Voltaire (the famous atheist)’s last words were reportedly to a priest who asked him on his deathbed to renounce Satan, to which he said, “Now, now, sir... now’s not the time to be making new enemies.” Dominique Bouhours

actually wrote this song right after God had delivered him from the hand of Saul—many years before, probably about 40 or so. The author tells us that in vs. 1: And David spoke to the Lord the words of this song on the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. But now the editor, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, puts this song at the end to wrap up David’s life and capture all of his major life themes. (You’ll also find this song recorded as Psalm 18, also).

Textually, it is important to note that the editor puts this song of David here, at the end of 1–2 Samuel, to mirror the song of Hannah that he used to open the book. (TABLE) They are like **bookends**, which is what these 2 guys represent. We went through Hannah’s song our first week—you should go back and listen to that first message so you can see the parallels. Hannah opens her song by saying God is a rock. David opens saying the same thing, vs. 2 “The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, 3 my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my savior...” Hannah says that God will lift the humble. David says, “I was ‘the humble’ that God lifted up.” Hannah said that God would provide for Israel a King. David says “I was that King,” or at least, the beginning of the lineage of that King. Hannah’s song is prophecy; David’s song affirms that prophecy. Both Hannah and David rejoice that God is the salvation for those who are weak and the Savior for those overlooked or oppressed by others. (TABLE) Again, these two songs form **bookends** on these books of 1–2 Samuel—they make for beautiful symmetry.

was a famous English teacher. His last words were literally, “I am about to—or I am going to—die. Either expression is correct.” I hope I have that kind of poise when I die. That’s called dying on-brand.

I am not going to read this song in its entirety--I hope you'll do that this week if you haven't yet. I'm going to draw out 3 dominant themes from it; 3 truths about *God* that David believes his life proclaims.

As you write them down, I'd encourage you to **consider what 3–4 things about God** you would want to communicate to your kids, or to those in your circle of influence, when you die. You may not be a poet, but if your life were written as verse, so that others might know it, what would you teach them, so that they wouldn't blow it? (See what I did there?) Here's David's 3:

1. God my hope

Let me again read vs 2: **2 "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, 3 my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my savior..."** (Now vs) **4 I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.**

If there is **one thing David's life teaches us**, it is that God will be the strength and shield and sword for all those who trust in him.

- God was **David's strength** when he, as an unlikely young shepherd boy, was anointed king of Israel. When nobody else believed in David, David believed in himself, not because of self esteem, but because he knew God believed in him.
- God was **David's deliverer** when David rushed out to face Goliath. That gave David a courage that no one else had—not even Saul in all of his armor.

- He was **David's shield** when he hid from Saul. In this song David calls God his 'rock.' David had hid from Saul in and behind literal rocks as Saul chased him for several months. They kept going in and around mountains, like when you're playing tag and someone is on the other side of a table...) David was saying "God, this giant rock protected me from Saul's arrows. But the REAL rock, my REAL refuge from danger, was never a mountain. It was never a piece of granite. It was always you. Knowing you were in charge was my table of peace in the presence of my enemies.

If there is one thing David's life screams at us, it is: HOPE. IN. GOD. It's where all his confidence came from. I love how Hudson Taylor, the missionary to China, said it: **"All of God's 'giants' have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on God being with them."** **Hudson Taylor**

That was it—just weak people, shepherds, who knew God was with them. God's giants are weak men and women who reckon that *God is with them*, and their hope for any kind of success is the grace of God. They apply this to literally every part of our lives.

Parents, it's how we are supposed to think about raising our kids. My hope in my parenting is not in my parenting skills; it is in God who shows grace to my kids.

One of my favorite parenting books is **Elyse Fitzpatrick's *Give them Grace***. It doesn't have the most practical tips--I have other books for that (I'll post those on social media this week since I know some of you parents will ask). But I love *Give Them Grace* because in it she points out how so many books on parenting seem to guarantee

success in parenting if you just follow this basic strategy... And a lot of the strategies are great--biblical, even. But **she points out that God was a perfect father and 1/3 of angels and the only two humans he created directly rebelled against him...** She's like, "So, you think you'll be able to out-technique God?" **The really dangerous problem with this kind of thinking, she says, is that it keeps Christian parents from the one thing they most need, and that is to cast themselves on the mercy of God to work in their kids' lives.**

She points to **1 Peter 5:10**, which says, **"And after you have suffered a little while (that's a great description of parenting, isn't it, parents?), the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."**

- Who will restore you? It doesn't say that you'll eventually find your groove, or the winds of fortune will change, or what doesn't kill you makes you stronger, or kids are resilient--it says, *God will **HIMSELF** restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you.*
- The greatest thing I can commend to you as a parent is to actively hope in the grace of God because your great parenting skills *will fail you ... but God will not.*

"All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on God being with them." Hudson Taylor

- See, that means when I get up in the morning--mom, dad--and feel overwhelmed as a parent, I say, "I don't have to go figure out how to be a parent today. God is at work in my kids' life. He is my rock and my shield and my horn of salvation. I just need to *join him* in what HE is doing in my kids' lives."
- You see, the sovereign God, the Ancient of Days, Israel's Rock, the sustainer of the ends of the earth, Alpha and Omega is *with* me in

this. The one who walks on water, the one who raised a little girl from the dead; the one who made the lame walk and the blind see; that's the one walking with me through this day's parenting. I'm going to be OK.

My hope for my marriage is not in my ability to keep things together; it's not even in my Christian marriage techniques that I preach to you about. My hope is in God whose mercies are new for me and Veronica every morning. Our confidence for tomorrow is not in our ability to provide for ourselves or even in how much money we've set aside, it's in the one who says "I will supply all your needs according to my riches in Christ Jesus." My hope for my future, after I have messed things up with sin and bad choices, is not in my ability to pull myself by my bootstraps up above my sin, but in God's willingness to weave redemption in the ruin of my sin, to bring beauty from my ashes, to create triumph from tragedy, and to bring resurrection from death. He is our rock, our refuge, our strength, and our horn of salvation.

"All God's giants (starting with David) have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on God being with them."

When I am asked by younger church planters the one secret to building a great church--they're all excited, they get out their notebooks. And I tell them, if I have to boil it down to one thing--I tell them it is to put all your hopes for success in his mercy and not your ability. I often use **Proverbs 3:5-6** which say, **"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.**

Don't lean on your own understanding, your own ability to lead a church, direct a church, innovate in a church. Don't lean on your ability to figure it out. Trust in *the Lord*. **In all your ways acknowledge him** (i.e. acknowledge your dependence on him), **and he will direct your paths.**" This is where I point out that God's preferred metaphor for us in the Bible is sheep, which I've told you is good and bad news. The BAD news is that sheep are idiots. The eyesight of sheep is notoriously poor, and their heads hang low, which means they usually have no idea where they are actually going--you never see a sheep up on his hind legs checking out the terrain. They are dumb; they step into streams and drown, or on uneven parts of the path and tumble over and become cast and die, or they eat and eat in a circle until there is no grass left and they are basically consuming their own waste. That's the metaphor God chose for your pastor. That's the bad news. But the good news is we have a Shepherd who loves to lead sheep when they are dependent on him. I tell young church planters that the best ideas in our church--the best ideas in The Summit Church, the greatest gifts God gave to our church--did not come through my careful planning or brilliant strategy. The greatest things in our church were unexpected interruptions. Gifts of grace God put into our path because we, as a church, for 21 years now, have trusted in his mercy, not our abilities. Put your trust, I tell them, in *the Lord*. Put your trust in the *God of all grace*, who will himself restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

What David came to realize is that God orchestrated his life to teach him this. Look at vs. 7 "In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I called. God put David into situations of distress where every earthly help had failed him and no earthly strategy could save him.

This might be what God is doing with you. **Early on in this series I told you the story of the lamb with legs broken...** David had multiple moments where God did this with him. **Where is God doing this to you?** Is it in your parenting? Is it in your marriage? Is it with an addition? Where are you experiencing heartache, frustration and failure? He wants you to do what David did: "In my distress I called upon the Lord, to my God I called."

God wants us to learn the 4 words that can absolutely transform your life: *GOD IS ALWAYS FAITHFUL*.

Hudson Taylor (again): "God wants you to have something far better than riches and gold—or personal charisma or talent—and that is helpless dependence upon him."

Y'all, I've spent my entire life trying to avoid being helplessly dependent on anyone. Right? He wants you to learn helpless dependence. And see: **if dependence is the objective, weakness becomes an advantage.**

So beware your strengths, not your weaknesses, because your weaknesses are where you will experience God and your strengths are where you will forget him.

Lesson #1: God my hope

2. God our Savior

When David first wrote these words about God being his "horn of salvation" and his "deliverer", he had no idea the extent to which he would need them to be true. You see, when David first wrote these things, he thought of them *mainly* as God's promise to save David from his enemies, and to deliver him from those, like Saul, trying to

destroy him. What he didn't realize was that the main way God would deliver him would be *from himself*.

You see, by the time we get to this point in the book of 2 Samuel, we're not sure how to feel about David anymore. In some ways, he's shown great promise as a King; he's done some great things; but then again we have the terrible Bathsheba incident. And he's murdered Uriah, one of his most loyal men. And then we have Tamar's story and Absalom's story which present David, at best, as an absent and disengaged father. And he lacked the courage to remove men like Joab from the head of the army, who was an abusive and murderous tyrant.

And so **the words of this song, put at the end of David's life, have a deeper meaning than David first realized when he wrote them**--God is going to deliver David and save him not just from his enemies, but from himself. And **we end the books of 1 and 2 Samuel** realizing that these books are not ultimately about David. **BTW, here's an interesting textual note:** The books of 1–2 Samuel don't record the death of David--which would be odd if 1–2 Samuel were primarily the biography of David. I mean, what kind of biography would fail to record the death of the central figure? But that's the thing: 1–2 Samuel are NOT meant to be primarily the story of David; they are supposed to show us how David pointed us to another King, a greater King, who would be that righteous King that Hannah prophesied would come; that King we've always craved--that King who would **HIMSELF** be our rock, our refuge, our deliverer, and our salvation.

In the last verse of this song, David points us to this coming King: "Great salvation he brings to his king, and shows steadfast love to his anointed, to David and his offspring forever." (2 Sam 22:51) He ends this whole thing looking to his *offspring*! He's looking beyond, he's looking for another Savior. And sure enough, 970 years after David died, in the skies above a hillside just outside of Bethlehem, a vast multitude of angels appeared proclaiming to another group of

humble shepherds, "Unto you is born this day, *in the city of David, a Savior who is Christ the Lord.*" (Luke 2:11).

When David said in this song, "God is my Savior," he had no idea how much he would need that to be true. At this point in the book we see that David's ultimate hope was anchored in that one-way, unconditional promise that God made in **2 Samuel 7**: Do you remember how in that chapter David had said, "*God, I'm going to build something great for you! A temple that will be the biggest in the world!*" And God corrected him, "David, no. No. This whole thing is not about you doing something for me, but me doing something for you. David, you'll never be able to build me anything--you're too weak; too sinful. You're going to fail. In fact, you're about to make decisions that devastate not just your family, but the whole nation. This is about what I am going to do for you."

Friend, listen: Every other religion in the world is spelled "D-O." Do. Do great things for God. Be a good father. Be honest. Be kind. Give money to the church. Do great things and he will accept you. The gospel—the gospel of David—is spelled "D-O-N-E." Done. It's a one-way promise that you simply receive. **It's not about what you do for God that he rewards you for; it's about what God gives to you that you glorify him for.** (2x)

And that brings us to the final, and what is perhaps the best--though most confusing--part of this song. Write down:

3. God my restoration

And look at verse 22: "The LORD dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he rewarded me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD and have not wickedly departed from my God. 23 For all his rules were before me, and from

his statutes I did not turn aside. 24 I was blameless before him, and I kept myself from guilt. 25 And the Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to my cleanness in his sight. (22:21–22)

We read this and we say, *“Uh, David, bruh... blameless is not the word I’d use to describe your life.”* How could Bathsheba, or Uriah, Tamar, or any of us reading these stories say, “Yep, David was blameless and clean—yeah, squeaky clean; he kept the ways of the Lord and did not wickedly depart from God”?

Why would David say this, and why would the editor include it here at the end of David’s life? As I see it, there are 3 options--and I need you to really lean in here (maybe even physically, literally lean in here), because this is a little deep--I’m gonna need you to put on your **theological ‘big boy’ pants** for a minute.

- **Option 1 = “Hagiography.”** *Hagiography* is a fancy word that means you tell the most polished version of a person’s life, leaving out all the bad parts. You turn them into a hero. I remember as a kid reading a biography of George Washington--and it was basically like, *“He did no wrong. He walked 5 miles to repay a penny someone had overpaid him. He could not tell a lie when he chopped down the cherry tree. He was dauntless, fearless, a man with no flaws. And that’s why America is awesome.”* And George Washington was a great man, but we know that he, like many great men, had inconsistencies. Grievous ones. If you don’t believe that, read Ron Chernow’s 2010 biography of him. Is the author trying to hero-ize David? To whitewash David’s past? Well, no--I mean, the same author that put this here also recorded all the bad stuff in the preceding chapters, and he’s not trying to pretend that what he just recorded didn’t happen. Whitewashing

someone’s past is not only dishonest, it’s also harmful for victims. It’s hard for someone who has been deeply hurt by someone else to sit there and hear us talk about how this or that person was perfect, or that era of history was perfect, when they really suffered at the hands of the person or those people we are lionizing. I’ve heard victims say that being abused was bad enough, but then to see that victimizer presented as if they had no flaws is even worse; it makes them feel completely invisible, like their past pain is irrelevant. I don’t think that’s what the Bible is doing. The sin David committed was real and the pain he caused was real. The Bible’s been clear about that. This isn’t hagiography. This is not whitewashing.

- So **Option 2 = “Positional Righteousness”** Our second option is to say that these statements are declarations about David’s positional righteousness in Christ. After all, the gospel is that God gives us Christ’s righteousness. When you trust Jesus as Savior, your sin becomes his and his righteousness becomes yours. It’s called gift-righteousness. I’ve told you before that it’s almost like you and Jesus are sitting together in class taking a test, and you didn’t study at all so you fail spectacularly, but he studied perfectly so he aced it. BUT, when it’s time to turn in your papers, he takes yours and writes his name on it and then gives you his with your name on it, so that he gets your failing grade and you get his ace. At the cross, Jesus took our sinful record and gave us his perfect righteousness. Is that what is happening here? All these statements about David’s righteousness are really about Christ’s righteousness? Well, it is certainly true that the gospel is that we receive Christ’s righteousness, **but there are several things in this text that don’t quite fit with that explanation; that indicate “positional righteousness” is not the full answer to this**

problem. I mean, look again at what David says, vs. 21: “According to the cleanness of my hands... vs. 22: I have kept the ways of the Lord, I have not wickedly departed from my God... vs. 23, from his statutes I did not turn aside. 24... I kept myself from guilt. 25 And the Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness. Over and over David uses the word “my.” If David is only pointing to the righteousness of Christ, that’s an odd way of describing it. No, it’s clear that David here is referring to actual good things that *he* himself did. Not good things that Jesus did, but good things that David did. Which leads us to...

- **Option 3: “New Creation Righteousness.”** The third option is that this final song of David demonstrates for us the reality and power of God to restore the believer. Let me point you to something else David said (What I’m going to say in the next few minutes is absolutely going to change some of your lives):
 - **Psalm 103: The Lord does not deal with us according to our sins (10).** In other words, David’s sins are off the table.
 - Compare that to vs 21 of this Psalm: **The LORD dealt with me according to my righteousness** (2 Sam 22:21). He *didn’t* deal with me according to my sins, which were real. He *does* deal with me according to my righteousness, however. Which means David’s righteous acts stay on the table. David’s wicked deeds--off the table. David’s righteous deeds, still on the table. David had sinned, grievously. God doesn’t remember those things anymore. But David also was the humble shepherd boy who depended on God when the world was arraigned against him. He showed real courage when he ran out to face Goliath while everyone else sat like a coward on the sidelines. David showed incredible patience and faith by not taking matters into his own hands when killing King Saul

would have made things much easier for him. David showed extraordinary grace and generosity and forgiveness to his enemies. God remembers all those things.

- This is incredible. Because of salvation, God doesn’t remember our wicked deeds, but he *does* remember our righteous ones.

And that means, and this is going to change somebody’s life today--
Because of Jesus, our lives can be *defined* by the good that we do, not the sins that we committed.

I’m talking with people today who have sinned grievously in their past. And I’m not trying to minimize that or whitewash what you did. The pain you caused was real, and in many cases needs restitution, and in some cases, those choices leave lasting earthly consequences. There are certain kinds of abuse that mean you’ll never be able to re-engage certain kinds of relationships this side of the resurrection.

But the **good news of the gospel is that even with the reality** of those sins, **your life can be DEFINED not by the bad that you did**, but by the works of faith and good that you have done, and WILL DO, in Jesus’ name.

The **final verdict on David’s life--the final summation of his life--the label Scripture** gives him--was not abuser, compromiser, negligent father, or murderer, even though all those things were true. The label over David’s life, the final verdict, is humble man of faith, blameless one, gracious man of God, and man of courage.

Because of your past, **you might label yourself ‘divorcee’; ‘cheater’; ‘thief’; ‘adulterer’; ‘absent father’; ‘abuser’; ‘criminal’;**

'compromiser'; 'coward'; 'alcoholic'; 'failure.' But God has a new label for you. And from this point forward your life can be defined not by the sins you committed but by the good that you do. And it is time for some of you to get on with that. Stop wallowing in the shame of your past and get on with the good that God has for you. Declare with David: *God my restoration!*

Eph 2:8–10, "By grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." God sees us, Paul says, in Christ. Christ's righteousness given to us as a gift. But the verse goes on, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, that we should go and walk in them."

What are you re-created for? For good works. God saved you for the good he was going to do through you, and from now on your life will be defined by that. BTW, the Greek word for "workmanship" is *poema*--from where we get our word "poem," or song. God wants to write a song about your life, too, like 2 Samuel 22 was for David's life. And the melody of that song, the chorus, the refrain, is not the sins that you committed, but the works of faith and love you pursued after you were forgiven.

VAMP

This is when God is at his best. I listened to a message recently by the **famous African American evangelist EV Hill**. One of our worship pastors, Hank Murphy, sent it to me. It was called "When God was at his best." In the message Dr. Hill went through a litany of things in the Bible where we see God's power on display.

- He starts with creation. We look at the vast expanse of the stars, or the breathtaking complexity of the human DNA strand. Was God at his best there? Those things are amazing, he said, but God was not at his best in creating them. Dr. Hill then says (and I can never truly imitate him--Rich Bowman over at DDC could). Dr. Hill says, "And then God made this beautiful country of ours. He made Florida, and gave it white sand beaches and beautiful vistas; he made the South, and gave it to tobacco and cotton and produce of every kind. He made the Midwest, and gave it to wheat and corn. He made Texas, and gave it to cows. He made California, and gave it to the hippies. And then he made NC... and he decided to LIVE there. God was certainly showing off, he said, when he made this great country of ours. (BTW, you say, "Wait... you didn't mention NJ and the NE." That's right. God's not to blame for that. Man made that.)
- But then Dr. Hill asks again, "Was God at his best when he created this great country of ours?" "No, no..." he said. "It's amazing, but God was not at his best there."
- "How about in the Exodus," he asks, "where God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt through the mighty plagues, led by a pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire at night?" Was he at his best there?" No, he says, not even there.
- "Then we fast forward to Mary's immaculate conception, where God overshadowed Mary and made her conceive a son, though she had never known a man. And the baby she gave birth to was fully God and fully man. A miracle of miracles. Was God at his best there?" "No, not even there," he says.
- So, we come to the cross and resurrection. "And surely" we say, "God had to be at his best there!" "But even there," says Dr. Hill, "God was not at his best."

- “No,” E.V. Hill says, “God was great in all those places, but he was at his best when he came into my life and saved me, changed me, and made all things new in me.”

*It took a miracle to put the stars in place;
It took a miracle to hang the world in space.
But when he saved my soul, Cleansed and made me whole,
It took a miracle of love and grace.*

There is nothing quite so spectacular as when God takes a life ruined and marred by sin, like David’s, and makes it new; when God takes what sin has destroyed and broken and breathes new life into it. That’s when God is at his best.

And so it’s no wonder David closes the Psalm of his life glorifying God’s power in redemption: 50 “For this I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations, and sing praises to your name. 51 Great salvation he brings to his king...” For this. For God’s power of restoration and redemption.

Friend, the salvation of God gives you 3 things: **Forgiveness** (that’s the one we always talk about. Your sin is paid). **2nd: power**. We talked about that a few weeks ago. God gives us *power* to break the cycle of sin. 3rd: **Healing. He gives us healing** from the damage of sin.

- Isa 53:6 says, “And by his stripes we are **healed**.” The cross not only gives us forgiveness; the cross included provision for our complete and total healing. We can pray for healing from all of sin’s damage on the basis of the cross. (Listen: We can even pray for physical healing, healing from our sicknesses, based on this.

(Does that mean God always physically heals? No. Sometimes the full healing doesn’t come until we get to heaven. But just because we don’t experience the fullness of that healing in this life doesn’t mean it wasn’t included in the cross or that we can’t ask for an early installment of it.)

This morning, God’s cross offers you **forgiveness from the penalty of sin**; the **power** to overcome sin; and **healing from the damage of sin**. Because of the gospel, you can say with David: God my hope; God my Savior; God my restoration.

And, there’s no better picture of these than **BAPTISM, which we are going to give you a chance to do**.

- Very important symbol, our first act of obedience.
- In the NT, Peter compared our baptism with the Exodus: God delivering us from our bondage to sin in Egypt
- Paul compares it with the death of Christ. We symbolically enter the death of Christ. All your old sins--your Bathsheba and Uriah and Tamar and Absalom moments are dying; you are raised to a new life defined by good works.

Have you done that? 50 of you are about to; there are probably dozens, maybe hundreds of you in here that haven’t and need to join them.

Some of you haven’t done this because you’ve never known you should, or you’ve never had the chance. Some of you just started a relationship with Jesus in the last few weeks. Like I said, Scripture says it is your first act of obedience.

Some of you keep making excuses...

- Later
- Practical excuses (hair; rode with people--lots of people who will drive you home if your friends are too selfish and ungodly...)
- Baptized when I was a baby
- I have questions: We are ready to start the conversation.

Teams move into place I'm going to have you stand...