

Deliver Us From Evil

2Samuel 21:15-22:51

According to CNN on November 17th 2012 Salvador Alvarenga and his young friend Ezequiel Córdoba set out on a two day fishing expedition in the deep waters of the Pacific Ocean somewhere between 50-100 miles off the coast of Mexico.

While out on the water they ran into some trouble.

A storm came up, which the older Alvarenga had weathered many times before, but on this occasion his boat motor had stopped working leaving them at the mercy of the wind and waves.

Their boat was a small twenty five foot open fiberglass vessel and in addition to a dead motor, the fishing gear and the radio went overboard in the storm.

The only things that remain were a large icebox, normally used to hold fish, and a bucket to bail out the boat.

After seven days the storm lifted, but it had driven them hopelessly out to sea and they could do nothing except drift along.

Besides the obvious danger of storms in the ocean there was also the need for water, food, and shelter from the sun.

For shelter they huddled together in the icebox, for food Salvador was able to catch the odd fish and every now and again a bird would land on the boat, and for water they depended on rain which at times was scarce.

He says that he saw ocean liners go by, but he is not sure whether he imagined them or his attempts to get their attention failed.

Out in the middle of the ocean without even as much as a paddle and no way to call for help is a pretty bleak picture.

Things got even worse for Salvador when his young friend Ezequiel passed away under the extreme conditions.

Somehow the fisherman continued to hold on to hope.

Whether the man is a Christian I do not know, but the article makes it clear that he believed God was his only hope.

He held on to that belief until one day he looked out on the horizon and saw mountains.

When he felt he was close enough he jumped overboard and swam for it and soon found himself on the beaches of the Marshall Islands.

He managed to stay alive for a record setting 438 days while his boat drifted over 9000kms.

It is an incredible story and the man was completely correct in thinking that God was his only hope.

[While being in a situation like that makes our need of God's deliverance crystal clear, the truth of it is we are always in that situation it is just that most of the time we don't realize it. We are reminded of that in our text this morning **2Samuel 21:15-22:51**. As the writer begins to bring the story of David's life to a close, he points us to a recurring theme in the king's life and reign. The theme of deliverance. Time and again David found himself in life threatening situations and time and again God rescued him. This text reminds us of that and it also allows us to listen in to David's response of worship to the deliverance of the LORD. As we survey this passage together I want to point us to some really important takeaways. Let's first consider the close of chapter 21 which tells us about war with the Philistines and shows us that...]

Point #1 – God's people need deliverance. (21:15-22)

In order to know the LORD as Saviour one of the most basic things that has to happen is we have to understand that we need a Saviour.

David's need for deliverance is clear in 22:15-17.

For most of his life David had been a warrior fighting the enemies of the people of God and so it is no surprise to find the king on the battlefield when war comes to his nation.

It is clear that time has caught up with David as it says here he, "grew weary".

Warfare in the ancient world was incredibly demanding. It was more than a question of raw power it was also a matter of endurance.

While David was still likely very strong, his cardio fitness had faded a bit with age and that gets him into trouble.

He is confronted by a descendant of the giants who is seeking to do him in and he doesn't have enough energy to keep up the fight.

He needs to be rescued and thankfully his nephew Abishai sees the situation and comes to help him and defeats the giant.

From that time on it becomes clear that David is no longer up for the rigors of the battlefield and he should stay back because preserving his life, as the LORD's anointed, is important to the nation of Israel.

That is followed by the writer telling us about three more descendants of the giants in verses 18-22 each of whom is defeated by one of David's men.

Verse 22 concludes by telling us that each of the giants "fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants."

Why tell us about that here as the book is coming to a close?

The answer that seems to make the most sense is that the writer wants to book end David's life with God's deliverance.

Remember shortly after Samuel anointed David king? He went out to the battlefield and famously fought a giant.

Do you remember what David said to Goliath when he mocked the young man for his smaller stature?

David said, “I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel.”

Then with a sling and a stone he wins the day.

Why? Because he was a good shot? He was that, but that is not why he wins. He wins because God saved him.

He knew his need then and his need of deliverance is obvious all these years later as well.

Being able to see that is critically important.

[This is a bit like jumping out of an airplane with a parachute. Did you know that some people do that for fun? Not me! If you told me to strap on a parachute and jump out of a perfectly good airplane I would say, “Why would I do that? There is no need!” On the other hand if the plane were crashing, I’d strap that bad boy on and jump out ASAP because there would be a very clear need to do so.]

Spiritually speaking we are all in a crashing airplane and we all need the parachute of God’s deliverance in Christ, but if we don’t see our need then we will won’t come to Him.

We all have a problem with God on account of our breaking His laws.

We can’t fix that! We can only trust in the cross and empty tomb of Jesus to deliver us from our disobedience and failure.

This is also true of living out the Christian life.

The devil is a powerful enemy and our sin nature is very much at war with the work of the Spirit in our hearts.

Our hope in the face of that in NOT our own strength, wisdom, or will power our hope is in the power of God to change the heart.

[When God puts giants in our lives, things that are too much for us, He is showing us that we need His deliverance. Listen, it is no short coming to accept the fact that we are weak and need help. That is accepting reality. David knew that when he was young and he knows it when he is older. Do we know that? If we do there is good news for us. We see it here in the song that David composes in response to God saving him time and again. What we see here is that God is able to save His people and David also tells us something of why He is able to rescue us. He shows us that...]

Point #2 – The deliverance of God’s people depends upon God’s attributes. (22:1-19)

The only reason anyone can ever have real hope in life is because of Who the LORD is. It is because of His unchanging infinitely glorious nature that we can be saved.

As David looks back over all the ways in which God has saved him through the decades he says this in verses 2-4.

There is a clear emphasis here on the stability and safety of the LORD.

He calls God his 'rock'. That is to say the LORD is immovably stable which points us to the immutability or the unchanging nature of God.

He is the same yesterday, today, and forever; therefore, we can trust His promises.

He calls the LORD his fortress, refuge, and shield.

It is God Who stands in front of him and behind him.

He is therefore, protected beyond measure.

He says the LORD is the 'horn of his salvation'.

That is a picture from nature. Horns for many animals is the means of displaying their strength.

When He says God is the 'horn of his salvation' he is saying the LORD is the power or strength of His salvation.

That raises a question, "How powerful is God?"

In this song David calls upon the image of the Red Sea and God's presence on Mount Sinai.

He says in verse 10 God 'bowed the heavens' the idea there is that the LORD peels back the sky to descend in His glory.

When He did that at Sinai, the mountain is ablaze, and the people tremble at the sight.

This is the God who gives the command and the waters of the deep are piled up in two massive walls and in a moment He dries the sea bed for His people to walk through (v.16).

He is the absolute Master of all creation and He does all that He pleases.

David also says in verse 7 that the LORD 'From His temple heard his voice, and his cry came to his ears'.

How does God hear from heaven?

He is both omniscient and omnipresent. That is He knows all things and He is present everywhere.

While He makes His presence most visibly known in the throne room of heaven, there is nowhere in all creation where His presence is absent.

God knows our need, He has the power to save, and He is unchangeably willing to save all those who call upon His Name.

Because of His glorious nature, which is beyond measure, the LORD can deliver His people.

[How many of you have ever heard someone say, "I can't believe in a God that I cannot understand?" That is one of the reasons why humans beings are so prone to worship created things rather than the Creator because we want something we can wrap our minds around. The

problem with that is that if we could wrap our minds around God then He wouldn't be able to save us.]

When we talk about doctrines like God's knowledge, power, and unchanging nature we are talking about things that we can only scratch the surface of.

When we talk about things like the Trinity and the incarnation it is impossible for us to wrap our minds around.

At the same time, we are also talking about things absolutely essential to our salvation.

It is the Father who pours out His wrath on the Son so that our debt can be paid. In that there is a clear distinction of persons.

There is also the need for equality between Jesus and the Father. If Jesus does not have a divine nature to apply to His atoning work how can He absorb the fullness of God's wrath? He can only say the words, "It is finished" because He is truly God.

How can the Spirit apply the work of redemption and indwell all believers if He is not omnipresent? How can He, as the Scriptures say, plumb the depths of the mind of God if He lacks in knowledge?

We can only be made alive by the grace of God if the Spirit shares in all of God's attributes.

[That's just for starters. The nature of God is the reason why we can be saved. Don't ever think brothers and sisters that thinking rightly about the nature of God is some academic exercise that doesn't really matter one way or the other. God's attributes form the very foundation for the hope of the gospel. Having established that, David moves on to reflect on why the LORD acted to deliver Him. Now it is really important to consider these next verses very carefully because it is super easy to get the wrong impression here. It is possible to read this passage and conclude that the Lord saves us because of our own goodness, but that would be a mistake and it would be hopeless. Everyone who belongs to the LORD belongs to Him by grace alone, but we also need to know that belonging to Him gives us a desire for what is good. That is why David shows us here that...]

Point #3 – God delivers those who seek righteousness. (22:20-29)

A significant part of what it means to be redeemed by the LORD is to have a love for what is good in His sight.

Let's consider together what David writes in verses 20-24.

He mentions God's 'delight' in him at the end of verse 20.

That delight is evident when the LORD sends Samuel to anoint David as king.

Looking on outward appearances there were a number of other choices that made more sense, but God tells the prophet that He is considering something

more important than what people can see, He says that “The LORD looks on the heart.”

What I believe is critical to keep in mind about that statement is that it suggests that David already trusted in the LORD.

When he was converted we don’t know, it could very well be that he trusted the LORD from the earliest of ages, but what is clear is that he possessed a deep desire for the things of God.

That is what we see in these verses, a deep desire to do what is right.

We also must consider the immediate context of this passage.

The passage is a comparison between David and his enemies who sought his life.

As Carl Keil puts it, [...[this is] not perfect righteousness or holiness but the righteousness of his endeavors as compared with the wicked.]

In other words God’s deliverance of David from the hostility of his enemies shows that David was in the right and his enemies in the wrong.

Nowhere is David’s heart for what is right more on display than in his dealings with Saul.

Even when he had the opportunity to make things easier on himself, he chose to show kindness to his enemy for the LORD’s sake.

He loved God’s word and sought to keep it.

Did he do that perfectly? Nowhere close to that. He commits terrible sins in his life.

His standing before the LORD was not according to his own ability to keep his hands clean, but according to God’s grace and forgiveness that made his hands clean through confession, repentance, and faith.

But why does he confess, repent, and believe?

Because he loves the LORD and that love drives him to care about the things of God, to care about what is right in God’s sight.

This is one of the things that clearly distinguishes the people of God from the people of the world.

[We can see a physical picture of this principle in DNA. DNA is a fascinating, it is like the instruction book for our body to make all the things that make us the way we are physically. We get our DNA from our parents. When my dad and I are standing next to each other it is not hard to imagine where I got my fantastic hair and rugged good looks from. In many ways my DNA makes me a lot like my father.]

That is also true spiritually speaking and that, I think, is David’s point here.

When we belong to the LORD we care about the things that He cares about.

Yes it is true there is a war going on between our sin nature and our spiritual nature, yes it is true that we stumble, but at the end of the day we care.

We want to grow in grace and we want to obey the LORD because we love Him.

[That is a consistent truth in the whole Bible. It is one of the big things the New Testament points us to so that we might have assurance in our salvation. Do you want to know if you belong to Christ and that God will save you from sin and death and hell? Ask yourself, do I love the LORD and do I care about what He says. The more certain you are of that, the more certain you can be that you are in Christ, forgiven, made new, and that God will rescue you from every evil. As that happens we need to beware of the danger of self-righteousness. David speaks to that in verse 28 where he says that God, “saves a humble people”. Humble people don’t look to themselves they look to the LORD. That is what we are encouraged towards in the last section of this chapter as David shows us another aspect of God’s deliverance. He shows us in verses 30-51 that...]

Point #4 – God delivers His people by enabling His people. (22:30-51)

While salvation depends 100% upon the grace of God, by His grace He gives us the ability to do saving things.

Verses 30-35 give us a sense of the theme of the final part to this song.

David was no couch potato.

He walked/ran countless miles to get from place to place and he fought many battles over the years.

The combination of strength and endurance that he must have possessed would have been impressive by any standard.

He says here that came to him by the LORD.

Did the LORD do the running or the jumping over walls?

No, David did the running and the jumping but he is saying God enabled him to do it.

He says that God ‘trains [his] hands for war’.

Did the LORD swing the sword for David? Did He practice for the warrior king? Did He sharpen the sword, strap on his armour, and bend his bow?

No, David did all that, but he understood that he did those things because God enables him.

In verses 38-49 he talks about his victories over his enemies.

He is the one who did the fighting, clashed swords, and devised tactics.

Why did he win? Because God enabled him.

Sometimes in the Bible God does the fighting for His people and all they do is watch, but most often He enables His people to do the things He has called them to do.

Any strength, wisdom, or success that David can speak of is a reason for praise rather than pride.

It is the very same for us.

The LORD doesn't read your bible for you!

The LORD doesn't pray for you!

The LORD doesn't strap on the armor of God for you, but He enables you to do that so that you can take your stand against the devil.

If we reduce salvation to a get out hell card, then we are failing to see what the fullness of salvation is.

It is true that the moment a person trusts Christ as his Lord and Saviour he is forgiven for everything and no longer under the condemnation of his guilt!

That is amazing, but the fullness of salvation is more than that.

The fullness of salvation is a heart changed, a heart made alive by the power of the Holy Spirit enabled to do new things for the glory of God.

This is not something that might happen to the believer, this is something that does happen for the believer.

[Michelle reminded me yesterday of John 15 where Jesus describes the relationship between Himself and His people like that of a vine and branches. He says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." The branch produces fruit because the vine enables it to do so.]

Everything that we do that is worth any eternal value at all we can do because the LORD enables us.

Anything that we do for the good of our souls, anything we do that keeps us from evil, and everything we do for the glory of God happens by the grace of God.

Is it any wonder David takes 51 verses to sing about the deliverance of God?

He is a man that sees his need, do we see ours this morning?

He is a man who knows His hope depends on the LORD being all that He is, do we know what the LORD is like today?

He is a man who has a heart for what is right in the sight of God, do we long for the same?

He is a man who knows that his every success is a gift from above, do we share that perspective?

If we do we can be joyfully confident when we pray as Jesus taught us that the LORD would 'deliver us from evil' because He will.