

The Lord Has Promised to Deliver You



David Wilkerson April 10, 2006

In a secret ceremony designed by the Lord, the prophet Samuel anointed David to be king of Israel. Samuel told this godly young man, "You are now appointed by God to be ruler over his people." Yet it would be a long trip to the throne for David. Before the promise of his anointing was fulfilled, this devoted servant of the Lord would face many trials and testings.

Just five chapters later, we see David scurrying over hillsides and along dusty roads, running from King Saul, who had vowed to kill him. What a humble beginning for such a God-fearing, God-loving man as David. Here was a servant after the Lord's own heart, recently anointed, now running for his life, hunted, helpless, homeless and alone. David's only thought was, "I have to get out of this country right now. If I don't get away from Saul's jurisdiction, I'm dead."

He fled for the closest border community, which was the Philistine city of Gath, ruled by King Achish. As David approached this enemy stronghold, he tried to pass himself off as a normal traveler, hoping he wouldn't be recognized. But he must have overheard the whispers of the border guards: "Isn't that David, the man who killed our Goliath? The Israelites sang his praises for 'slaying ten thousands' of our people! It looks like we have a prize possession in our midst. Let's take him to the palace and present him to the king."

David knew his life was in danger, because the enemy Philistines would most likely accuse him of terrorism. He would probably be beaten shamefully and made a spectacle, being displayed from city to city. Scripture reveals, "David ... was sore afraid of Achish the king" (1 Samuel 21:12).

As he was being led to the palace, David grew so desperate that he decided to fake insanity. He began to contort his face, roll his eyes back and foam at the mouth. The Philistine on-lookers must have been shocked as this once-mighty warrior now babbled senseless words and screamed like an idiot. I picture those hostile crowds suddenly parting as David made wild gestures, scratching at doors and striking at those around him.

In those days, there was a great fear about insane people, because they supposedly had demons that could attack. Try to picture the chaotic scene that must have followed in the palace when David was brought in. As he played the madman before Achish, babbling and drooling, the Philistine king cried out, "Get this man out of here. He's a lunatic. Why did you bring this fool into my house?"

And so David was taken back to the border, where he was warned to leave and never come back. Suddenly set free, he escaped to the cave of Adullam, where he penned Psalm 34 in gratitude for his deliverance. In this moving Psalm, David recalls the whole episode of his capture and how God brought him out of his frightening trial.

I have to say, of all 150 Psalms, this one is my absolute favorite. It is all about our Lord's faithfulness to deliver his children from great trials and crises. David declares, "I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.... The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.... The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.... Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all" (Psalm 34:4, 7, 17, 19).

Note David's claim in this Psalm: "I sought the Lord ... This poor man cried..." (34:4, 6). I ask you: when, exactly, did David do this crying out? It had to have happened while he was feigning madness in Gath. Yet he certainly couldn't have prayed audibly in the Philistines' presence.

This brings us to another truth concerning God's deliverance. Sometimes the loudest cry is made without an audible voice.

I know what this kind of "inner crying out" is like. Many of the loudest prayers of my life — my most important, heart-wrenching, deepest cries — have been made in total silence.

At times I've been so benumbed by circumstances that I couldn't speak, overwhelmed by situations so beyond me that I couldn't think clearly enough to pray. On occasion, I've sat alone in my study so baffled that I was unable to say anything to the Lord at all, but the whole time my heart was crying out: "God, help me! I don't know how to pray just now, so hear the cry of my heart. Deliver me from this situation."

Have you ever been there? Have you ever thought, "I don't know what this is all about. I'm so overwhelmed by my circumstance, so flooded by deep pain, I can't explain it. Lord, I don't even know what to say to you. What is going on?"

I believe this is exactly what David went through when he was captured by the Philistines. When he wrote Psalm 34, he was making an admission: "I was in a situation so overwhelming that I played the part of a fool. Yet, inside I wondered, 'What is going on with me? How has this happened? Lord, help!'"

And so it seems David was saying, "This poor man cried out from within, not knowing what or how to pray. And the Lord heard me and delivered me." It was a deep cry from the heart, and the Lord is faithful to hear every whimper, no matter how faint.

At times we can only stand still and know that the Lord is our Deliverer.

In 1958, I was brokenhearted over a news story about seven teenage boys who stood trial for murdering a crippled boy. The Holy Spirit stirred in me so strongly that I felt led to go to the New York courthouse where the trial was taking place, and I entered the courtroom convinced the Spirit had prompted me to try to talk to those youngsters.

As the day's session came to a close, however, a realization began to dawn on me. I thought, "Those boys are going to be led out that side door in chains, and I'll never see them again." So I got up and made my way down the aisle toward the judge's bench, where I asked to be allowed to talk with the boys before they returned to their cell.

In an instant, policemen pounced on me, and I was unceremoniously escorted from the courtroom. Flash bulbs popped all around me, and I was besieged with questions from reporters who were covering the trial. I could only stand there speechless, utterly dumbfounded, in a humiliating, embarrassing situation. I thought, "What will my church back home think? People are going to see me as crazy. I've been so naive."

In the midst of all this chaos, I prayed inside, "Lord, I thought you told me to come here. What went wrong?" I couldn't pray out loud, of course, because the media would have thought I was even crazier than I appeared. (And I looked pretty silly already, as I was wearing a bow tie!)

Yet God heard the cry of this poor man that day, and he has honored my silent cry ever since. You see, from that very pitiful scene in the courthouse, the Teen Challenge ministry was birthed, with a reach today that extends worldwide. And I happily share in David's humble testimony from Psalm 34: "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad" (Psalm 34:2).

David is saying here, in essence, "I have something to tell all of God's humble people on earth, now and in ages to come. As long as this world exists, the Lord will deliver everyone who calls out to him and trusts in him. In his incredible mercy and love, he delivered me, even though I made a very foolish move."

Here is what I have learned from Psalm 34: When the enemy, Satan, comes at you like a flood ... when you find yourself in deep waters of affliction ... when troubles stagger your mind ... when chaos swirls around you, and you can't even think straight ... you don't need a prayer book or a doctrine to lean on. And you don't have to condemn yourself for playing the fool.

All you need is to know that our blessed Lord hears every sincere cry, loud or unspoken, and he responds. He will send an angel if he chooses, or even a host of them, to surround you and keep you from danger. Even if you have acted foolishly or had a terrible failure of faith, you only need to get back to calling on your Deliverer. He is faithful to hear your cry and to act.

Peter provides another insight concerning the Lord's deliverance.

The apostle Peter writes about two cataclysmic events from Genesis: Noah and the flood, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. When you think of these two events, how do you picture them?

The first involves the awful cries of masses of drowning people, as God avenged the violence of Noah's generation. As the terrible floodwaters rose above houses, trees and the highest points of land, people clung desperately to floating branches, broken furniture, wood of any kind, yet all in vain.

In the next scene, we can only imagine how giant sulfuric flames consumed two entire cities. As God's fiery judgment fell, people screamed in agony as they began to suffocate and perish by the tens of thousands.

The Bible states clearly that both of these events were the judgment of the Lord. Yet the fact is that neither event had to do with God's people. So, does this mean these awful scenes were solely about the Lord's vengeance upon sinners? It's true these scenes were meant to serve as signs, examples to all of humankind in every generation, with God's warning: "I want you to know I deal severely with violence and rampant sin."

It is here that Peter gets to his point. He tells us, "If God ... spared not the old world, but saved Noah ... bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes ... making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot ... (then) the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations" (2 Peter 2:4–7, 9, *my italics*).

Despite the severity of these examples, God is sending a clear message of comfort to his people, as if to say: "I have just given you two of the greatest examples of my compassion. If, in the midst of a world-engulfing flood, I can deliver one righteous man and his family out of the havoc ... then can I not deliver you also? Can I not provide a miraculous way of escape?"

"If I can send down fire-and-brimstone judgment that consumes entire cities at a time, yet I manage to send angels into the chaos to deliver Lot and his daughters ... then can I not also manage to send angels to deliver you out of your trials?"

The lesson here for the righteous is this: God will do whatever it takes to deliver his people out of fiery trials and temptations. Think about it: it took the opening of the Red Sea to deliver Israel out of the clutches of its enemy. It took water out of a rock to save those same Israelites from their wilderness trial. It took miracle bread, angels' food literally sent from heaven, to spare them from hunger. And it took an ark to save Noah from the flood, and "angel escorts" to deliver Lot from fiery destruction. The clear point is that God knows how to deliver his people, and he will go to any extreme to accomplish it, no matter what their circumstance.

Peter's phrase "God knoweth how to deliver" means simply, "He has already laid plans."

The wonderful truth is that God has laid his plans for our deliverance even before we cry out to him. And he doesn't sit on those plans; he only awaits our cry for help. We may be entangled in the struggle of a lifetime, wondering how God will deliver us, yet he is ready at all times to put his plan into action.

We see this illustrated in Jeremiah 29, when Israel was in captivity to Babylon. Here was perhaps the greatest trial God's people had ever experienced, yet the Lord promised them: "After seventy years, I will visit you and perform my Word to you."

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jeremiah 29:11). This last phrase means, literally, "to give you what you long for." God was saying, in other words, "I'm telling you that I'm not mad at you, that my thoughts toward you are good ones. And furthermore, I am making you a promise."

The promise appears in the next verse: "Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you" (29:12). Note the first word of this verse: "Then..." I believe God is saying simply, "If you pray, I

will hearken to you. You see, I have a specific plan of deliverance for you, and you are always to trust me to execute that plan and bring it to pass.”

The reason God wants us to keep praying is so we'll be ready for his deliverance. In short, we need to be prepared to believe those incredible thoughts he has toward us. His Word tells us, in essence, “You have my promise to deliver you out of all trouble and temptations. I have given you powerful examples of how I delivered my servants in past crises. Now, go and pray with expectancy, hope and faith that I will visit you also. I only have good thoughts concerning you, thoughts of healing and restoration.”

As I studied the word “deliverance” in Scripture, I read of God's plan for King Hezekiah.

It is written of this godly king, “Hezekiah ... wrought that which was good and right and truth before the Lord his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered” (2 Chronicles 31:20–21).

In so many words, Scripture is saying that this man was the greatest king Israel ever had. We're told Hezekiah's heart was so set on the Lord that there was no king before or after him who was like him. Then consider the very next verse: “After these things, and the establishment thereof, Sennacherib king of Assyria came, and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself” (2 Chronicles 32:1).

Note the opening phrase here: “After these things...” This refers to all the good that Hezekiah had done: his walk of truth and holiness, his seeking of God, his cleaving to the Lord, his fight against sin and compromise, his deep prayer and trust, the national revival he led. In the wake of these blessed things, Scripture says, *then* the devil came in. Principalities and powers of darkness surrounded the righteous king and God's people, waging an all-out war to bring them down and destroy their faith.

Yes, this all came about after the establishment of Hezekiah's many ministries. The word “establishment” in this passage means “stable, mature, well-grounded.” In short, we're seeing a declaration of war on a man of God who was stable in spirit and mature in faith. Satan wasn't wasting his powers on a weak, inexperienced, wavering child of God; he was aiming his most intense weapons at a spiritual giant.

Virtually overnight, Hezekiah found himself in an impossible situation. The question was, “Why?” This godly man wasn't living in sin or rebellion; he was one of God's most faithful servants. Yet the Lord didn't explain to Hezekiah why this terrible siege had befallen him.

Soon the air inside Jerusalem's walls was filled with devilish lies and blaspheming voices, with accusations from Satan swirling in Hezekiah's mind: “God is no longer with you, Hezekiah. He is clearly chastening you. If the Lord is with you, how could you possibly be in such trouble?”

Here is a clear illustration of the devil's plan against every devoted servant of God.

In our own times of trial and temptation, Satan comes to us bringing similar lies: “You're surrounded now and there is no way out. Greater servants than you have quit in circumstances no worse than this. Now it's your turn to go down. You're a failure, otherwise you wouldn't be going through this. There's something wrong with you and God is sorely displeased.”

In the midst of his trial, Hezekiah acknowledged his helplessness. The king realized he had no strength to stop the voices raging at him, voices of discouragement, threats and lies. He knew he couldn't deliver himself from the battle, so he sought the Lord for help. And God answered by sending the prophet Isaiah to Hezekiah with this message: “The Lord has heard your cry. Now, tell the Satan at your gate, 'You're the one who is going down. By the way you came here, you will also go out.'”

Hezekiah had very nearly fallen for the enemy's trick. The fact is, if we don't stand up to Satan's lies — if, in our hour of crisis, we don't turn to faith and prayer, if we don't draw strength from God's promise of deliverance — the devil will zero in on our wavering faith and intensify his attacks.

Hezekiah gained courage from the word he received, and he was able to say to Sennacherib in no uncertain terms: “Devil king, you did not blaspheme me. You lied to God himself. My Lord is going to deliver me. And because you blasphemed him, you will face his wrath!”

The Bible tells us that God supernaturally delivered Hezekiah and Judah on that very night: “It came to pass that

night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses" (2 Kings 19:35). Ever since the cross of Christ, God's people have had even better promises than Hezekiah had.

In just the first few books of the Bible, God miraculously delivered Noah, Lot, David, Hezekiah, Daniel and the three Hebrew children, Moses, Joshua, Israel, Joseph and multitudes more. As for God's people today, Christ's blood has delivered us from sin, destruction and much more also: "(He) gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Galatians 1:4).

Believers today stand not just on a promise but also on the shed blood of Jesus Christ. And in that blood we have victory over every sin, temptation and battle we will ever face. Maybe you've received a letter from the devil lately. I ask you: do you believe God has the foreknowledge to anticipate your every trial? Your every foolish move? Your every doubt and fear? If so, you have the example of David before you, who prayed, "This poor man cried, and the Lord delivered him." Will you do the same?

Remember: if you will pray, even in silence ... if you will refuse to fear Satan's attacks and rest in faith ... then you too will wake up one day to a great victory. God himself will deal with your enemy, and he will work his plan to deliver you. ?

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