

Psalm 18

For the director of music. Of David the servant of the LORD. He sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. He said:

¹ I love you, LORD, my strength.

² The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

³ I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise,
and I have been saved from my enemies.

⁴ The cords of death entangled me;
the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.

⁵ The cords of the grave coiled around me;
the snares of death confronted me.

⁶ In my distress I called to the LORD;
I cried to my God for help.

From his temple he heard my voice;
my cry came before him, into his ears.

Luke 1:57-80

The Birth of John the Baptist

⁵⁷ When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

⁵⁹ On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, ⁶⁰ but his mother spoke up and said, "No! He is to be called John."

⁶¹ They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has that name."

⁶² Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. ⁶³ He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John." ⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵ All the neighbors were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. ⁶⁶ Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, "What then is this child going to be?" For the Lord's hand was with him.

Zechariah's Song

⁶⁷ His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

⁶⁸ "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come to his people and redeemed them.

⁶⁹ He has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David

⁷⁰ (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),

⁷¹ salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us—

⁷² to show mercy to our ancestors
and to remember his holy covenant,

⁷³ the oath he swore to our father Abraham:

⁷⁴ to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,
and to enable us to serve him without fear

⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

⁷⁶ And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,

⁷⁷ to give his people the knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,

⁷⁸ because of the tender mercy of our God,
by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven

⁷⁹ to shine on those living in darkness

and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

⁸⁰ And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.

The Horn of Salvation (Psalm 18:1-6 & Luke 1:57-80)

18-Dec-2022

G'Day Church Family

Please have your Bibles in front of you – we'll be looking at both Bible passages – from Psalm 18 and Luke 1

There's an **outline** for you to **take notes** – if that helps you **concentrate**.

Let me ask **God** for His **help** and **guidance** first – let's **pray**...

Intro/Relationships

God created us human beings – in **His image** (Gen 1:26) and He **desires a relationship** with us – so **He** can be **given all glory and honour** for creating everything (Rev 4:11)

As **human** beings we have the ability to **know God** and therefore **love Him, worship Him and fellowship with Him**

God did **not** create us human beings as **equal to Himself**.

Logically, He could **not** do so. If God were to create another being of equal power, intelligence, and perfection, then **He would cease to be the one true and unique God** for the simple reason that there would be **two gods**—and that would be an impossibility. “The LORD is God; besides him there is **no other**” (Deuteronomy 4:35).

Anything that **God creates** must of necessity be **less than Him**. The **thing made** can **never** be **greater than**, or **as great as**, the **One** who **made it**.

Why did God create us?

God **created us for His pleasure** and so that we, as His creation, would have the **pleasure of knowing** Him.

To do that we **must have a relationship** with Him.

God also gave us **fellow human beings - to have relationships** with.

We **can't function properly** without relationships

Whether that be a relationship with God, with our **family**, our **friends**, our **church folk**, our **workmates**, our **school and uni-mates**, our **mates at the clubs and organizations we belong to** – even those who govern us

We even have relationships with our pets – which sometimes has the added advantage of them not speaking to us!

(pause)

[PowerPoint 1-Messy Relationships]

However, because of **human behaviour** – our **relationships** are **not perfect** – sometimes **broken a little** – and **sometimes broken a lot**.

Relationships can be **messy!**

We may sometimes **see those** we have a **broken** relationship with – as the **enemy** – whereas in fact - **broken relationships** are the **consequences** of our **behaviour** or someone's else's **behaviour** – rather than the actual person.

In our OT reading from **Psalm 18** – the **context** is that **David** is **on the run** from his **enemies** who **want to kill him** – especially **King Saul** [we get that from the heading of the Psalm]

In the Psalm – **David identifies** the enemy and the solution

Let's look at the **solution first** - **David sees who will save him** from the enemy

He identifies a ***horn of salvation*** in verse 2

[PowerPoint 2-Horn]

In the Old Testament, the word **horn** often signifies **strength**. A *horn* is the pointed bony structure growing out of an animal's head.

Animal **horns**, used for **fighting**, **protection**, and **showing dominance**, became **symbols** of **strength**, **power**, and **victory** in the Bible. Often, the Bible mentions a “**horn**” as a literary **symbol** representing **strength** and **power**.

David's Horn of Salvation (Psalm 18:1-6)

[PowerPoint 3-Psalm 18:1-2]

So, in King David's context – He sees **his strength** – not coming from **himself** – **but from** the **Lord** God – the Horn of Salvation – the One who is going to save him from his enemies.

That is why David can use **strong adjectives** to **describe** God

V1 – my **strength** –

V2 – my **rock** – my **fortress** – my **deliverer** – my **salvation** - my **stronghold**

All **picture** words of what it's like to have the **One True God – with you** at all times.

David has **confidence** in the **One** who can **fix** His problem

But it's **worth looking** at the **problem** too

David is in danger from his enemies – who are out to kill him

But the **real danger** is not the people who are after him

But **what** these **people** have inside them

The real problem is a small three letter word – **SIN**

[PowerPoint 4-Sin]

You see, David's enemies are sinful – that's why the relationship is broken

Take his enemy **King Saul** - for **example**

He is **jealous of David**, he is **paranoid**, he **lies**, he **doesn't trust God**, he's **angry**, he desires to take **matters into his own hands** – and **kill** David – whom God has chosen to be the next king instead of Saul

So, **David's enemy** is **sin** [the **sin of those out to get him** – and **David's own sin** – let's not pretend David is squeaky clean]

[PowerPoint 5-Sin and Death]

David's **other enemy** is the **threat of death**

See v4 – the **CORDS OF DEATH ENTANGLE** me – the **TORRENTS OF DESTRUCTION** overwhelmed me

V5 – the **CORDS OF THE GRAVE** coiled around me – the **SNARES OF DEATH** confronted me

David's life is in danger...

Where will David get his safety from?

Of course, from the Lord – this horn – this strength of salvation

See v6 – [In my distress I called to the Lord – I cried out to my God for help – and from his temple, he heard my voice, my cry came before him, into his ears](#)

David is saved by God – his strength!

Like David – we **all face** the same **two enemies** – Sin and death

Sin – our sin - and other people's sin - affecting us

That sin – **breaks** our **relationship** with **God** – and **breaks** our **relationship** with each **other**

That sin – also has the **punishment of death**

A **spiritual death** (a broken relationship with God and separation from Him) and

a **physical death** – when we all stop breathing one day

And Like David – we need the same solution

We need a **Horn** of Salvation

But **before we look** at that **Horn of Salvation** that we have **available to us**

Let's just **think about** our **sin** for a moment

If we were to look at the relationships, we currently have with other people

What sin is there in **our** lives which is **affecting** our **relationship** with **others**?

- Jealousy
- Telling lies and being deceitful
- Anger
- Violence

- Impatience
- Harshness
- Selfishness
- Interfering
- Meddling
- Gossiping
- Manipulating
- Stealing
- Sexually immorality
- Pornography
- Lusting
- Idolatry
- Blasphemy and cursing
- Drunkenness and addictions
- Stubbornness
- Unforgiving [remembering if we don't forgive – God won't forgive us]

All these **sinful actions affect** our **relationships** – and also **bring dishonour** to **God** – and the **punishment** – as we said – is **death**

Just like David – **we** are **in danger** from the **enemy** of **sin** and **death**

Yes, we do have someone who can fix this sin and death – which we'll come to

But first,

We need to **pause** – and **reflect** on our sin

[PowerPoint 6-Repent]

And **be honest** with God – and **confess that sin**

And **Repent** – do a **U-Turn** – say **Sorry** – and **ask for forgiveness**

And **commit to** going in **God's way** – and moving away from such sinful behaviour

So, let's **pause** for a moment – **and write down what we need to repent of** –

let's **privately confess** that to God - in silent prayer

(pause)

Our Horn of Salvation (Luke 1:57-75)

[PowerPoint 7-Horn Jesus]

So, who is our Horn of Salvation?

For that, we need to turn to our NT passage in [Luke 1:57-75](#)

And the context is that an **old couple**, called **Elizabeth and Zechariah** have a baby in their old age

It's a **miracle** from God – who has **answered** the couple's **prayer** – and granted them a baby boy

This baby boy will be called **John** – v60

John means – ***God gives Grace***

And that's really important because **John** will grow up to be a prophet – who **introduces people to God's grace** – he introduces people to God's **free gift** of a saviour – this **Horn of Salvation** - that we all need

It's such **exciting news** that John's father, **Zechariah**, breaks into **song**

See v67

Zechariah is **filled** with the **Holy Spirit** – and **prophecies** about the **Horn** of Salvation we all have available to us

In his song – Zechariah **first talks** about the **Horn of Salvation** – in verses 67 to 75 – and of course he’s talking about the birth of **another baby** to be born – just after his own son - John – that of course is Jesus

Zechariah praises God

V68 – Because God has at long last – after **400 years of no prophecy** – since the prophet **Malachi** – **God now comes** to His people – through His Son Jesus

And Zechariah says God will **redeem His people** – v68 – which means **buy them back** – the **price** of buying people back to God – is for the baby **Jesus** to grow up and **die** on a cruel **cross** – and save people from the punishment of their sin – by having people’s sin dumped on Him instead

Zechariah describes Jesus – as a **horn of salvation** for us – v69

Now remember – horn is a **symbol of strength**

The **salvation Jesus offers** is **strong, triumphant, and powerful**. Jesus **offers mercy and cleansing** through His death on the cross. Jesus’ power and strength overcomes the punishment (which he takes instead of us) and overcomes death too (as His resurrection means we have eternal life available to us).

However **strong** our sin and spiritual **enemies** are, the horn of our salvation – **Jesus - is stronger** still.

In fact, the name **Jesus** means “**The Lord is Salvation**”

If there was a **picture Bible dictionary** – and you **looked up Salvation** – you would see a **picture of Jesus** on the **cross**

Zechariah goes on to say - what Jesus saves us from?

See v71 – He saves us from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us

And v74 – and He rescues us from the hand of our enemies

What we have to **realize** is – who the real enemy is

It's **not** the **people** against us – but the **sin inside them** – and the **sin inside us**

Think about it this way – **if people were without sin** – there would be **no wars, no invasions, no persecutions, no terrorism, no hatred, no broken relationships**

Jesus came to fix our broken relationship with God – **and** show us how we can live a life of peace with one another – if only we'd follow His perfect rule to -

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself (Luke 10:27)

If we were to do that – then as Zechariah continues in v74-75

We'd be **enabled to serve the Lord without fear** - in **holiness and righteousness**

So, **how** should **we respond** to this precious **gift** from **God** – of the **Horn of Salvation** – **Jesus?**

Our Response to the Horn of Salvation (Luke 1:76-80)

Well - the rest of Zechariah's song from verses 76 to 80 tells us our response

In this part of the song – **Zechariah's talking** about his **own son** now – **John**

And Zechariah describes what **John's job description** will be when he grows up

And **actually**, it's our job description – and our response too...

It's a **threefold** response

[PowerPoint 8-Response 1]

1. First - see V76 – We are **to go before the Lord and prepare the way for Him**. That's what John grew up to do – to **prepare people to meet Jesus** – telling people to **repent** – turn away from their sin – and turn back to the Lord – and that's our job too.

We **repent ourselves** and then we **explain** to **others** that they must **repent** too – and **come** and **meet Jesus** – this **Horn of Salvation** – before it's too late

But let's do it with gentleness and love...

[PowerPoint 9-Response 2]

2. Second – see V77 – **Give God's people the knowledge of salvation** – through the forgiveness of sins

- The true enemies of God's people - were not as most Jews thought, foreign invaders like the Greeks and Romans - but the enemy of sin - and it was to be the work of Zechariah's son, John to give **knowledge of salvation to the people** - through the **forgiveness of their sins**
- This is where the revolution begins. **Before** there can be a right relationship **between humans**, there must be a right relationship **between humans and God**, and the sin which spoils relationships with others - must be repented of and removed. Which can only happen by allowing Jesus – this **Horn of Salvation** to be our personal **Saviour** who'd died for our personal sins
- **God came to Earth** from Heaven – in the **form of Baby Jesus** – on that **1st Christmas** – to **shine light on those living in the darkness** of their **sin** and

those living under the **shadow of death** – because – you see - Jesus is the **light of the world** - calling people out of darkness into His glorious light

We need to give people the **knowledge of the salvation** available to them through Jesus – by getting beside them and teaching them the Good News of Jesus – and teaching them what the Bible says about Jesus [God’s word makes us wise to salvation!]

[PowerPoint 10-Response 3]

3. The part of our response – is in V79 – to **Guide our feet into the path of peace** – Once we have a restored relationship with God – and have peace with Him through our faith in Jesus. That means we can **show peace in all our relationships** – because **Jesus** came to **show** us a **better way to live** – by living a life that is **obedient and pleasing to God** –where there is no anger, no hatred, jealousy, intolerance, impatience, cruelty, no being mean spirited, judgmental and selfish. Instead, we offer love, forgiveness, understanding, mercy and compassion – and watch how **those things affect our relationships** in a **positive way**

As clear-thinking Christians, we **must believe** that it is the **will of God** for **wrong relationships**: whether international, national, community, family, friends, work or school **to be put right**. So, we must be **advocates of righting social wrongs in our community**, such as: persecution, racism, abortion, poverty, homelessness, addiction, domestic violence and so on

Conclusion

To finish up then,

As we **look at** our **relationship** with others

Be honest about where they are broken or not working

What do we need to address?

First – we need to be right with God – by accepting the Horn of Salvation – Jesus

And second – we need to then live lives attached to this Horn of Salvation – and model our lives on Him – in doing that – we start to repair our relationships with others

It's no coincidence that Jesus is called the **Prince of Peace**

(pause)

Let me finish with Romans 12:18 – where the Apostle Paul gives this wonderful advice - *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, **live at peace with everyone.***

It's my prayer – **this Christmas and beyond** – that we would find strength in the Horn of Salvation – **Jesus – and live in peace with everyone.**

Let's pray

Father God – thank you that you created us as relational beings.

Thank you that you desire a loving relationship with us and you that you want us to have relationship with others.

Thank you – that even though – our relationship with you was broken – and all our relationships are messy – you raised up Jesus – our horn of salvation – and He was able to purchase forgiveness and eternal life in His mighty strength and power – through the cross – and through the empty tomb!

Help us to respond – with John's job description by

Preparing people to meet Jesus

Giving people the knowledge of salvation through Jesus

And guiding people towards Jesus the Prince of Peace

In His name, we pray. AMEN.