

Explosion of Praise – 2 Samuel 22:21-51 – Rev. Budy Setiawan

In verse 21-23, David said “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. For all his rules were before me, and from his statutes I did not turn aside”. We might wonder, was he not wrong in saying these things? Has he forgotten his past sins? Is he trying to raise himself up before the Lord with things that are not true? The verses, being parallel to Psalm 18, which speaks about the future Messiah, is prophetic in nature. One can interpret that these verses are not talking about David, but about the Messiah. But one of the principles in trying to interpret the Old Testament is that the context of the words needs to be applicable at the time as well. Therefore, these verses must also be correct in David’s context.

We know that David has committed great sins before God, so when verse 21 and 25 speak about how the Lord rewards according to righteousness, what is this righteousness that David is talking about? Verse 22 – 24 explain this. In verse 22, “For I have kept the ways of the Lord and have not wickedly departed from my God”, David did not claim that he is sinless before God, but he is faithful in general and in principle. While David has sometimes failed, he didn’t ever turn away from God like the wicked people. Verse 23 paints a similar claim, “For all his rules were before me, and from his statutes I did not turn aside”. This is another general claim that he is obeying God’s rules.

Verse 24 is a sort of conclusion, “I was blameless before him, and I kept myself from guilt”. The original Hebrew word used for “blameless” does not actually mean that there is no sin or mistake, but there is a wholeness or integrity. And this is the word that was also used by Job when he was being accused by his friends, that he will not deny his “integrity”. When David was talking about righteousness and holiness, he was talking about the direction of his heart. The fear of the lord has always been in the very depth of his heart, even though he has occasionally failed. Isn’t having such a heart so crucial? Because God does not only look at our actions, but he looks deep into our hearts.

Verse 26 says “With the merciful you show yourself merciful; with the blameless man you show yourself blameless;”. On the contrary, watch out for a person who from the outside appears to be good, but deep down in his heart has not feared the lord and has only used God for his own gain. These people will not receive help from God when they search for him. For the children of God, while we are not sinless, the question is that whether in the very depth of our hearts, we love God? There are two signs of someone who fear the lord and live an obedience life to him:

1. Teachable heart. Verse 34- 35 says “He made my feet like the feet of a deer and set me secure on the heights. He trains my hands for war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze”.
2. Glorifies God through all the help that he received from God. This is the main theme that David is singing about in verse 32 – 51, focusing on God’s power and sovereignty amidst David’s kingdoms.

David needs to train hard and be disciplined, but David recognised that all his achievements were all because of God’s strength. Is this not a balance that we have to strive in our own lives? That we must continue to strive, be disciplined, and bear our own cross, but when we are successful, we realise that God has provided the strength to be able to do it. Because of this, David praises God and exalts Him through the psalm.

From David, we know that God’s power is global, and David’s praises are international in nature. David wasn’t just sovereign over Israel, but the nations that he even didn’t know about came and worshipped him. This is a foreshadow of the messiah, whom all nations will come to worship, the king of kings. This is the same king who has redeemed us, sent us, and will guide us forever. This calling is to be the salt and the light of the world. The God who is sovereign over all things lives inside us and called us to live in him.

David concludes the psalm by bringing us back to God’s sovereignty and His kingdom will not end. Verse 51 says “Great salvation he brings to his king, and shows steadfast love to his anointed, to David and his offspring forever.” David praises and exalts God because he knows that his promises will not fail and will be accomplished. These promises are fulfilled in the coming, death, and resurrection of Christ. After Jesus resurrected, he said all power and authority in heaven and in earth were given to him, therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy spirit, and know that he is with you forever to the end of the age. Through this psalm David reminded us that God’s kingdom is through all nations and through all creations, so we are called to be his witnesses. Through all our difficulties, may we be people who have hope - for our hope rests in Jesus, for he has not only sent us to this world, but he says that he, who is sovereign over all things, is with you to the end of the age.

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