

This passage could be outlined in the following fashion:

vs. 1-5 His presence

vs. 2-11 His protection

vs. 12-15 His provision

vs. 16-19 Praise He should receive

I LOVE THE LORD

IF there is any pre-eminent reason to love the Lord, we could probably agree with the context of the psalm that it would be because he has heard my voice and my supplications.

This reason does not take the place of the fact that we realize that Christ gave himself for us on the cruel cross of Calvary.

It is based on this simple fact: Our relationship to God, God-ward from us toward God, begins with a cry to Him for forgiveness from His wrath because of our sin. We know that He heard our cry, if we ARE TRULY THE REDEEMED OF GOD, because His Spirit testifies to my spirit that I am a child of God and my life has progressed by faith in obedience to his Word: his precepts, his commands.

Once we realized, by the grace of God, that we were dead men walking, children of disobedience and wrath, children of darkness with all the passions of our lives ultimately ruled by the prince and slave-master of this world and its system, that we were without hope and without God in this present life, once we realized these truths upon hearing the precious gospel that is the power of salvation unto the souls of men, we cried out unto God for his mercy, to save us from the wretchedness of our sinful condition and we begged Him for forgiveness because we did not nor did we want to give glory to the majesty of his name, we did not want to obey the Word of eternal truth, we despised and rejected the son of Man who was indeed the very son of God.

Yes, we love the Lord because He has heard our voice, but may we never be arrogant enough to believe that we were able to cry out to him in and of our own

We love Him, because He heard us, but we love Him because He first loved us and if that were not the case then we would never have been able to cry out to Him in the first place.

The psalmist was one who had proven experience of communication with God. He had remembrance of times past when he knew with absolute certainty that God had responded to his cries, for whatever the reasons. These were not hoped for things with a sense of uncertainty, these were real responses from a real and true and living God who , in his infinite wisdom, has declared that His people should call upon Him in every season of life, in every circumstance and wait for His will to be revealed.

We may ask for Him to bring what we desire, but our desires may not be His will that proves that He is working to will and to do of His good pleasure in our lives for His glory and secondly for our benefit. But the more we know Christ our New Covenant and the truth of his Word and the more we pray, the more we can expect that we are praying according to the will of the Father and therefore we can have an expectation that we will receive that which we have asked for.

That was the expectation of the psalmist.

The psalmist's expectation could only be based on the faithfulness of God and God's response to the conditions he has put forth, when they are met.

Yes, it is true that God also provides for His children in unconditional ways, and this should gives us a reason for a moments serious consideration about our praying.

Can you remember the times when you have prayed and were sinning against God at the same time. This is not as ridiculous as it sounds.

Were you harboring any ill will toward someone? Was there a relationship with a brother or sister that was not reconciled?

Had you not yet asked forgiveness for some deliberate sin in your life. If the answer is yes, then God did not hear you with a purpose to answer your request according to

But you say what I asked for still came to pass and I respond,

This was an act of God's unconditional will for your life, it was a blessing or benefit that was there because of grace not because of prayer, because God in His sovereignty already purposed this thing for your life whether you knew it or not.

Why would God allow this?

Because He would like us to see how prideful we can be to think that God does not hold us accountable for our sin. That we can live any way we choose and believe that God will answer prayer, because we have a misunderstanding of what prayer is and how God really means to use it in our lives.

D.A. Carson says, "When it comes to knowing God, we are a culture of the spiritually stunted. So much of our religion is packaged to address our felt needs-and these are almost uniformly anchored in our pursuit of our own happiness and fulfillment. God simply becomes the Great being who, potentially at least, meets our needs and fulfills our aspirations. We think rather little of what he is like, what he expects of us, what he seeks in us. We are not captured by his holiness and his love; his thoughts, and words capture too little of imagination, too few of our priorities."

Scripture does say, "Ask and you shall receive", but it also says "if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" with an intent to answer as I request. God always answers. No and wait are answers.

We should be cautious when we say that God has answered our prayers. We should always be thankful for all that comes to pass in a way we may have desired, but let us always rejoice that we are the children of grace and grace is greater than our sin and therefore let us not be presumptuous when it comes to our praying, Lord keep me from presumptuous sin, but be ever mindful that a habit of confessing our sin before the Lord is one of the disciplines of sanctification and true holiness that will strengthen us in our LIFE OF PRAYER with the Father.

The psalmist made this a principle of life, according to vs. 2.

It was something he could not live without. He knew what it meant to practice the presence of the Lord in prayer. The events of his life proved that God hears, listens and answers in relation to prayer and this is something that was vital to the psalmist's life.

vs. 3 His particular dilemma.

He was in a circumstance where death was imminent, it was soon to be upon him. We do not know what was to bring about this death but he was in a place where extreme sorrow, and affliction were upon him. The pains of hell found him. Now this was a godly man so we know it was not a fear of hell that encompassed him but knowing the truth of what hell offered to those who would spend eternity there, he suffered some great physical or spiritual pains that reminded him of the torments of hell. It was as if the pain of hell reached out from the depths and grabbed hold of him with the purpose of bringing him to his death.

Trouble and sorrow were waiting for him.

Trouble and sorrow wait for all of us in one way or another. Even Christ did not escape these. These words are also familiar to those of David on that great day when God delivered him from the hands of Saul. " And he said, I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me. In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears." Psalms 18:1-6,

Does this mean that those who have a tried and true faith in the Lord have never died at the hands of the enemies of God? Does this mean that we are guaranteed that when we cry to God in the time of an enemies attack that we will be delivered?

The guarantee that we do have is that God is Sovereign and He does as He pleases for His glory, in and through the lives of His saints. This means there are times that He is glorified through the physical death of His saints- for the blood of the martyrs has always been the seed of the church and that physical death is a deliverance, a deliverance from further suffering, pain, rejection, ridicule and persecution, because Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints and it is appointed for man once to die and then the judgement. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.