

SERMON STARTERS - **Key words:** assurance, security, refuge, saved.

SAVED AND SAFE!

“The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;
my God, my strength, in whom I will trust;
my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.”
(2 Samuel 22:2 – repeated in Psalm 18:2 NKJV)

David has been called the “sweet singer of Israel.” 2 Samuel 22 is a song of David. The chapter begins with these words: “Then David spoke to the LORD the words of this song, on the day when the LORD had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.” His song covers many subjects but the primary theme is a song of triumph and of praise for what God meant to him when Saul was hunting him.

Scriptures abound with assurances of the defense and deliverance of those who put their trust in the Lord. I know of no verses that illustrate this truth in more ways than 2 Samuel 22:2 and Psalm 18:2 does. It is the testimony of David who verbalizes his confidence and assurance that he is safe in the care of God.

Consider the ways in which these verses give to us assurance that the children of God are secure and safe. There are 7 analogies that David uses to communicate his settled certainty that he is safe in God’s care.

1. He is the Solid Fortification – “The LORD is my rock”

Many times in the rocky terrain of the wilderness of Judea, when he was being chased by King Saul, rocks provided him protection and, being acquainted with the protection that rocks provided him there, he uses the analogy of the rock in reference to God.

He is not speaking here of God being a stone. He is referring analogously to God as being a great mass of rock, unshakable, indomitable, like a massive overhanging cliff under which he takes refuge or a massive stone-like mountain upon which he stands secure.

We therefore sing, *“On Christ the solid Rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.”*

2. He is the Safe Fortress – “my fortress”

A “fortress”, according to Webster, is: “A fortified place; a permanent fortification.” That certainly describes what and who God is in relation to His people and He is permanently such, as Deuteronomy 33:27 confirms: “The eternal God is your refuge.” Several of the psalmists refer to God as their personal fortress:

- God is acknowledged to be a personal fortress: “You are my rock and my fortress” (Psalm 71:3).
- God is approached as a personal fortress: “Bow down Your ear to me, deliver me speedily; be my rock of refuge, a fortress of defense to save me” (Psalm 31:2).

- God is announced to be a personal fortress: “I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress...” (Psalm 91:2).

To Whom do you turn for salvation, safety and solace? Can you sing, “*A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing?*”

3. He is the Supreme Deliverer – “my deliverer”

All of us need or will need deliverance from various types of difficulties. Scripture reveals some of the difficulties God’s children have experienced and from which God delivered them: He delivered Noah from the flood; the three Hebrews from the fiery furnace; Daniel from the den of lions; Jonah from the whale; Peter from prison; Paul from shipwreck, etc. No emergency is too hard for God.

Here are some of the prayers for deliverance:

- Prayer for deliverance from physical harm: “Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me and the mother with the children” (Genesis 32:11).
- Prayer for deliverance from persecutors: “Deliver me...from those who persecute me” (Psalm 31:15).
- Prayer for deliverance from sins: “Deliver me from all my transgressions” (Psalm 39:8).
- Prayer for deliverance of the poor and needy: “But I *am* poor and needy; yet the LORD thinks upon me. You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God” (Psalm 40:17).
- Prayer for deliverance from deceitful persons: “Oh, deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!” (Psalm 43:1)
- Prayer for deliverance from those who commit sin: “Deliver me from the workers of iniquity” (Psalm 59:2).
- Prayer for deliverance from persons who hate: “Let me be delivered from those who hate me” (Psalm 69:14).

Christopher Hitchens, a British American, atheist and author of the book “God is Not Great”, published in 2007, died in 2011. He was the major advocate of the New Atheism. He said, “All religious belief is sinister and infantile.” He said that he did not “need a crutch and therefore did not need the idea of a God” and that he could “stand on his own two feet and fight his own battles.”

There are an increasing number of persons who espouse the idea that William Henley stated in his classic, “Invictus”: “I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul.” However, I am not one of them! I am a sinner saved by God’s grace. I have been delivered from sin’s ultimate penalty for I could not deliver myself. Furthermore, I have been delivered many times from situations from which I could not deliver myself because I called upon the Lord Who is my Deliverer!

The apostle Paul testified that God would deliver him: “The Lord will deliver me from every

evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen! (2 Timothy 4:18) We who are His can be just as confident that God will deliver us! Therefore, with certainty we can sing:

*He is able to deliver thee,
He is able to deliver thee;
Though by sin oppressed, go to Him for rest;
“Our God is able to deliver thee.”*

4. He is the Source of Strength – “my strength, in whom I will trust”

The greatest challenges that we face require a quality and quantity of strength that no one of us possesses within ourselves. We need spiritual strength to overcome the forces of the world, the frailties of the flesh and the foe called the devil. We need moral strength to be victorious in our minds, our emotions and our spirits. We need intellectual strength to win in the conflict being waged by the worldly wise against truth and righteousness. No mere human being is a superman or superwoman. But we have a super-source of strength in the Lord God who is more than sufficient for these things. Remember, “The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our strength. Selah” (Psalm 46:7).

Many say that they believe in God, that He is great and mighty, but they do not trust Him. They are not wise like Solomon for he said, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5,6). Do you want to be blessed? Then trust in the Lord for strength for, “Blessed is the one who trusts in Him!” (Psalm 34:8).

Do not place your full trust in anyone or anything upon this earth but put your trust in God alone Who is the ultimate source of strength—and then sing:

*“God hath promised strength for the day,
Rest for the labor, light for the way,
Grace for the trials, help from above,
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.”*

5. He is the Saints Shield - “my shield”

A shield is a device that serves as a protective cover, guard or screen against danger. Ancient warriors carried a shield on the arm to fend off arrows, spears, etc. This analogy is applied to the guardianship of God in protecting His children.

The sovereign God is our shield. He said to Abraham: -“Fear not, Abram, I am your shield...” (Genesis 15:1). Commentator John Gill of old wrote in commenting on Genesis 15:1 as follows: “Christ is the shield of his people against all their spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, which being held up in the hand of faith, called therefore the shield of faith, is a security against them.”

The sons of Korah testified: “The LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace

and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” (Psalm 84:11) The Lord is the Power above us as is the sun; He is the Protector before us as is the shield. What He was in the Old Testament, He is to His people today. As our Shield He is invincible, standing between His people and their enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Can you confidently say with David, “You, O LORD, are a shield for me...” (Psalm 3:3) If so you can also sing:

*“O worship the King, all glorious above,
And gratefully sing His wonderful love;
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.”*

6. He is the Soul’s Salvation – “the horn of my salvation”

The phrase “horn of my salvation” occurs two times in the Old Testament and is a symbol of strength and power. The figure is borrowed from horned animals which have their strength and defensive weapons in their horns. It is a very “earthy” way to describe the power of God over one’s enemies. This terminology is somewhat foreign to us today. However, for those ancients living in an agrarian society the words were very descriptive.

However, there is another analogy that must be considered and that is that on the altar in the Old Testament there was a protrusion on the four corners of the altar called “the horns of the altar.” The words, “horns of the altar” occur more than a dozen times in the Old Testament. If a person who was threatened fled to the altar and took hold of the “horns of the altar” that person was protected. In I Kings chapters one and two there are two instances where this happened: “Now Adonijah was afraid of Solomon; so he arose, and went and took hold of the horns of the altar. And it was told Solomon, saying, “Indeed Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon; for look, he has taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying, ‘Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.’” (1 Kings 1:50-51). Again, in 1 Kings 2:28 it is recorded: “Joab fled to the tabernacle of the LORD, and took hold of the horns of the altar.”

The term “horn of salvation” is used of our Savior, the Lord Jesus, when Zacharias prophesied saying: “Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David” (Luke 1:67-69). Those who come to Jesus for salvation are saved and safe for eternity. They can and should sing:

*Saved by His power divine,
Saved to new life sublime!
Life now is sweet and my joy is complete,
For I’m saved, saved, saved!*

7. He is the Secure Stronghold – “my stronghold”

A “stronghold” is a place situated naturally, as on a hilltop, etc, or fortified by design, for the

purpose of providing protection from and defense against enemies. We have many enemies seen and unseen and therefore, we need a place that is strong and that will hold against the onslaughts of our enemies. When God is spoken of as a “stronghold” we are not to think of a geographical location or material place. We are talking about a Person—“The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe” (Proverbs 18:10).

The prophet Nahum reminds us that “The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him” (Nahum 1:7). He is near at all times and when danger lurks, when the devil tempts, when the flesh weakens, when foes threaten we have God as our stronghold. He is everywhere and we can be safer nowhere else than in circumference of His care.

Therefore, sing with assurance and conviction:

*“More secure is no one ever than the loved ones of the Savior;
Not yon star on high abiding, nor the bird in home nest hiding.”*

Summary

The great promises of salvation and security in Christ are timeless. The words that bought such hope to David are still a comfort to believers today.

The expressions that David used show that he owed his safety entirely to God. David used terms with which he was familiar—terms from the geographical, cultural and world of warfare with which he was well acquainted. If you were to describe, in an equal number of words, the safety and security you have in God, what figures of speech, what analogies would you use?

JdonJ