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SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 2000

DAVID, A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

A SHEPHERD AND FUGITIVE

Speaker: Bro. Ron Kidd

Study#6: The Goodness of God Endureth Continually

Reading: 1 Samuel 21&22 and Psalm 56

Good morning brethren and sisters and young people.

There's always a sad note, isn't there? when we come to the conclusion of a bible school; particularly for the host ecclesia, because it means that many brethren and sisters will be leaving and the host ecclesia is left a little void after the activities of the week. And we know that particularly, in Newfoundland, when everybody leaves.

But that's part of life, and David himself had to learn that there were sad moments and joyful moments, and yesterday we left him in 1 Samuel chapters 19 and 20, and we want to just pick up the threads there just briefly, in chapter 20 and verse 1. We remember that David had fled to Ramah to be with Samuel, and they dwelt together both of them, moving to Naioth, and Saul was reminded that David was at Naioth and eventually Naioth itself became an unsafe place for David to stay. And so verse 1 says, 'David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan and said, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life? And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will show it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so'. And to some degree Jonathan had a little difficulty appreciating that David was being sought by his father, to take his life. He had great difficulty accepting that, and we marvel to some degree at the loyalty that Jonathan had for his father. We've already seen that Jonathan accepted the Word of God, and that he himself had willingly bestowed his garments and his weapons upon David, and yet there's this loyalty that Jonathan shows with regards to his father. And David wasn't under any disillusion at all, he says at the end of verse 3, 'but truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death', David knew full well the circumstances that he was in.

Again, Jonathan says again in verse 9, 'Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?' But it's when Jonathan experiences the anger and the wrath of Saul his father, down in

verses 30 to 33, where Jonathan experiences this deranged man, who threw not only a javelin at David but now tries to take Jonathan's life, that he becomes very much aware of the dangers in which David finds himself. And despite the fact that Jonathan was loyal to his father even unto death, Jonathan's loyalty to God's Word was stronger. We want to pick up the thought in verse 11 of chapter 20 and read down to verse 17. 'And Jonathan said unto David, Come and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field. And Jonathan said unto David, O LORD God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about tomorrow any time or the third day, and, behold, if there be good toward David, and I then sent not unto thee and show it thee: the LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will show it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with thee, as He hath been with my father. And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the kindness of the LORD that I die not: But Also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house forever; no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth. So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David's enemies. And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul'.

And so they enter into a covenant and I want you to notice, b&s, the terms of that covenant. In verse 13, Jonathan acknowledges David as God's choice, and he indicates his commitment to the purpose of God, 'Yahweh be with thee'. And he knew what that meant in all its entirety, he was under no disillusionment what the effect of God being with him would have upon his household, 'as he hath been with my father'. Just as John the Baptist recognized that He must increase and I must decrease, Jonathan accepted the Word of God. And he seeks the kindness upon himself; NO, he doesn't, b&s, we show kindness in many ways, don't we? but very often we're very short in our showing of mercy; and that's that word 'kindness' is the word 'chesed' again, as bro. John has been reminding us. Thou shalt, not only while I live show me the mercy of Yahweh', and that's the mercy that we've got to show, the mercy of Yahweh. We are sometimes discriminate in the kind of mercy that we show, dependent on who it is, whether we like the individual or not; God's mercy has been extended to us when we were yet sinners. When we are without strength, as Paul puts it in Romans chapter 5, He loved us when we did not deserve it, b&s. And so Jonathan says, show me the kindness of the LORD, another show it to me; show me the kindness to my father's house, verse 15, but also thou shalt not cut of the misery from my house for ever' and so he wanted that mercy to extend to his father's house, to those that were David's enemies, even though, b&s, he recognized that Yahweh was the one who would cut off the enemies of David, everyone of them, from the face of the earth. And that's the point, it's God's prerogative! Verse 16, 'Let Yahweh even require it at the hand of David's enemies', let God be the judge! and there are times, b&s, when we have to make judgments in our life, in our ecclesial life. We've got to make some very difficult decisions with regards to fellowship, with regards to conduct, but there are some things that God only can decide! because God was dealing with his anointed, Saul, he was Yahweh's anointed and everyone who was in covenant relationship is Yahweh's anointed. And it's God's decision whether we will live or die.

We'll just get you an example which you've already perhaps covered in bro. David's talks upon the life of David; you remember in 1 Samuel 23, when they were in the cave together, Saul didn't know that David was in the same cave, and David had the opportunity of his life, to remove the stigma from him. And what he did, he went up to Saul as we saw last night, so beautifully be the children, he cut off the hem of Saul's garment. Now he had every right to do that, you remember Samuel, when he turned from Saul, he took the garment and rent it; and God had rent the kingdom from Saul! And David in effect showed that he was going to take it from him. But that wasn't the way, and he was very remorseful wasn't he? as we know from verse 5 of chapter 24, 'he was very remorseful', why? because it was not his right, and he remember the words of Jonathan, 'let Yahweh even require it at the hand of David's enemies'. And you and I, b&s, have got to learn that lesson which is a very hard one; we've have to show the mercy of Yahweh. Remember what Jesus said in Luke chapter 6 and verse 36, He says there, 'Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful', and if we want to know how God is merciful, have a look at yourself, and see if you're deserving of the grace of God. And I think that all of us will conclude, we fall terribly short of that mercy. And James tells us, in James chapter 2 and verse 13, 'God will have judgment without mercy that have showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment'!

Now David never forgot those words of Jonathan, he never forgot them. I want us just to go to a psalm which really isn't part of our study today, but Psalm 54 which commemorates this particular period of 1 Samuel chapter 23 actually and verse 19, when the Ziphims came and said to Saul, 'doth not David hide himself?' but we just want to draw from this psalm the fact that David did not forget what Jonathan had said to him. Verse 4, 'Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is with them that uphold my soul', notice the phrase 'the Lord is with them that uphold my soul', I think that's a reference to Jonathan, because Jonathan was given to David by God as his name means, to uphold him and strengthen him; and he performed the role of an elder brother guiding David and influencing him, when every opportunity found it. And when Saul couldn't find him in chapter 23, Jonathan knew exactly where David was, and he went to him and comforted him. And David says, 'God is mine helper and the Lord is with them that uphold my soul. He shall reward evil unto mine enemies; cut them off in thy truth'. So that was God's responsibility and David had remembered the words of Jonathan, 'God will reward evil unto mine enemies; cut them off in thy truth'.

There's a recurring phrase, b&s, which comes out in the early life of David, chapter 18 and verse 12 we read, 'And Saul was afraid of David, because Yahweh was with him'. That little phrase the Lord was with him, it crops up now and again in the life of David; we get it again in verse 14, 'David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD was with him'. Verse 28, 'And Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David', and it comes up again in chapter 23, doesn't it? and at verse 14. 'Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand', the LORD was with him. And what we find, b&s, as we go through this period of David's life, that our pockets of reassurance that God's mercy was continually working on his behalf. The goodness of God endureth

continually, is the subject title taken from Psalm 52, and there are pockets of reassurance in the life of David, which reminded him of this time and again and again. Now we're going to take one little example to begin with (and bro. David will again forgive me if I trespass a little), but chapter 23 and verse 14, and we're just doing this as an example because we want to look at the psalms related to this section. It says, 'Saul sought him every day, but God delivered them out of his hand', and then later on in the chapter, verse 19, we find that the Ziphites betrayed him. 'Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hid himself with us in strongholds in the woods; in the hill of Hachulah, which is on the south of Jeshimon'. And so the Ziphites betray his own brethren the Judaites, and when we come down to verse 25, when David gets knowledge of this, David moves. 'Saul also and his men went to seek them; and they told David, wherefore he came down into a rock and abode in the wilderness of Maon, and when Saul heard that he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon; so David's now in the wilderness and he's trapped, b&s, verse 26. 'Saul went on this side of the mountain and David and his men on that side of the mountain. And David made haste to get away from the fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them'. And so he's surrounded by Saul's men.

What was he to do? Psalm 17 gives us the answer! Psalm 17 and 31 are psalms I believe that fit into this particular period of David's life. Psalm 17 to begin with and verse 11, we see David trapped; 'they have now compassed us in our steps' (that's what it said, didn't it? in 1 Samuel 23), 'they have compassed us in our steps, they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth'. And what David does at this point when there is no way of escape, he commits himself to the Almighty. Verse 2, 'Let my sentence come forth from thy presence', if anything's going to happen to me, let it be from you, Yahweh, let my sentence come forth from thy presence. 'Let thine eyes behold the things that are equal', and so he commits himself to God in judgment. And when he's in this very difficult period, he prays to the Almighty, verse 13, 'Arise, O Yahweh, disappoint him; cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword'. And so David prays for deliverance. And in Psalm 31 perhaps we have another psalm related to this period. And again in verse 10 to verse 13, David describes his dilemma, 'My life is spent with grief and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed. I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours (the Ziphites, they were the ones that betrayed him; he'd become an enemy to them) 'and a fear to mine acquaintance (that was Saul, he was afraid of him; Saul feared David it said because he knew that the LORD was with him). 'They that did see me without fled from me'. And David's prayer comes in verse 4, 'Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for Thou art my strength. Into thine hand I commit my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O Yahweh God of truth'. Into thy hand I commend my spirit, there's David surrounded by the army of Saul.

And what happened? 1 Samuel chapter 23 and verse 27, 'And there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, haste thee and come; for the Philistines have invaded the Land; wherefore, Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines'. So God in His providential care, intercepted and took Saul out of the way and provided

the opportunity as it says in verse 29, 'And David went up thence and dwelt in the strongholds of En-gedi'. How unnecessary it is, b&s, to be fearful when we are in impossible situations, or at least, situations which appear impossible. You remember what Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 13, he says, 'God will not let us be tempted above that which we are able to bear', so whilst we shrink back from the thought of God saying to Abraham, 'take thy son thine only son and sacrifice him on the mount of Moriah', Abraham could handle that, in faith, you and I might not be able to do it; and there are many occasions in our life where the circumstances and the difficulties seem insurmountable; but God won't allow us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear, and He will with the temptation find a way of escape! And there it was in David's life!

And so we come to chapter 21 of 1 Samuel, 'Then came David to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said, why art thou alone and no man with thee? And David said to Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business' (actually, there's no point in us reading this, because our children did this so well last night, didn't they)? 'The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, let no man know anything of the business whereabouts I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place'. So David flees to Nob and he needs food and the only food that is available to him, is the shewbread from the temple. But there's one little comment which deserves our attention, whilst David is there, we read in verse 7, 'Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detaining before the LORD; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdsmen that belonged to Saul'. We're not told why he was there, he was simply detained before Yahweh, but it was Doeg the Edomite! And he's no ordinary Joe, he's no ordinary individual in the court of Saul; (if anyone's got the RV will see that that word 'chiefest' means 'the mightiest of the herdsmen that belongeth to Saul', he was a high ranking individual in the shepherding of Saul's animals. It's strange isn't it? he's an Edomite, and we've got to ask ourselves the question, what is an Edomite doing in the temple or house of God? And it doesn't matter where we look, b&s, in the scriptures, the Edomites were trouble!

You remember when Israel wanted to go through the land of Edom because it was quicker, in Numbers chapter 20, in verse 21, the Edomites refused access or passage through their territory despite the fact that they were brethren. Jacob and Esau, in Psalm 137 and verse 7 we read, 'that it was the Edomites that rejoiced when the Babylonians came in and destroyed the city of Jerusalem. They couldn't wait to take over the territory of Israel, in the book of Obadiah verse 13, that it was the Edomites that entered into the gate in the day of Israel's calamity and 'they looked upon their brother's affliction'. And in Malachi chapter 1, God reminds them that the Edomites are the people against whom Yahweh have indignation forever. Never trust an Edomite! and even in the days of Jesus, there was an Edomite or Idumean sitting upon the throne, and when Jesus was born, it was the Edomite that gave the decree to slay the children of Bethlehem. What was he doing, b&s, in the house of God? Psalm 52 gives us some insight, he's evidently up to no good. 'Why boasteth thyself in mischief, oh mighty man,

there's Doeg, and it's a psalm about Doeg the Edomite, 'The goodness of God endureth continually. Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue'. Doeg was bad medicine, he was big trouble, b&s, he was there to spy out the Land.

There were similar conditions in the first century; we notice that! look at that little reference in verse 2, 'thy tongue deviseth mischiefs' and then just think about what Jude said in verse 16 of his epistle, talking about those who were in the ecclesia, but they were destroying the truth. 'These are murmurers and complainers, walking after their own lusts, and their mouth speaketh great swelling words; the tongue deviseth mischiefs, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage'. Look at verse 5 of Psalm 52 (and keep Jude in mind) 'God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, He shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living'. And what does Jude say? verse 15, 'That God would come to execute judgment upon all, and convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him'. And what was God going to do with them? verse 12, 'He was going to pluck them up by the roots; put thee out of thy dwelling place and root thee out of the Land'. And there can be Doegs in the ecclesia today, b&s, whose objective is to undermine the truth and to destroy and make shipwreck men's faith. Why would we believe, b&s, that it is not possible today to have our Doegs? we seem to be blinded by the fact that the comments of Jude and 2 Peter chapter 2 which talk in terrible terms about brethren and sisters in the ecclesia, who were undermining men's faith, that it can't happen today? We are totally disillusioned if we think that, b&s, we all have our Doegs to contend with, and when the principles of divine truth are challenged, we've got to do exactly what David did!

And you'll notice when it was that David asked for a sword! It was immediately in 1 Samuel 21 when he saw Doeg in the camp. And David said to Ahimelech verse 8, 'Is there not yet here under thine hand a spear or a sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business requires haste'. And so as soon as he sees Doeg, he wants a sword. And we've got to take up the sword of the spirit; unfortunately, b&s, David didn't use it on that occasion. Isn't that sad? if David had laid hands on Doeg there and then, it would have saved a lot of lives; all the priests of Nob! But it says of David in verse 10, 'That David arose and fled that day for fear of Saul; and he went to Achish the king of Gath'. Can we imagine, b&s, David, the one who had been fighting the Philistines, being very valiant and triumphant over the Philistines, and in his fear of Saul, he goes to the very city where Goliath had come from, to the king of Gath? There are times in our life, that when circumstances present themselves, and opportunities arise, that we don't always act rationally. And David went from the frying pan right into the fire. 'And the servants of Achish said unto him, is not this David the king of the Land? Did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands? And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid'. So if he was afraid of Saul, his fear is

even greater now, that he finds himself in the camp of the Philistines.

Now it's uncertain, b&s, whether or not David was taken forcibly to Achish or whether he went voluntarily; you'll notice in verse 14, when Achish said unto his servants, 'Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore then have ye brought him to me?' so it's quite possible that David fled over the border and then was captured by the Philistines, that scenario is quite possible, and they brought him to Achish. Because when we go to Psalm 56, the psalm which we read by way of introduction, that's a psalm about this very incident, and you'll notice there in the superscription of the psalm, it's a Michtam of David when the Philistines took him in Gath. And that word 'took' means 'to seize' and so it is possible that David didn't intend to go to Gath, he moved over the border into the Philistine's land thinking that he was safe; that Saul who had shown great timidity in the face of the enemy, wouldn't go beyond the borders of the Philistines, but unfortunately he was taken by the Philistines and seized and taken to the king. Be that as it may, whatever reason it was a big mistake. And how easy it is for us to fall in the face of adversity, how easy it is for us to be critical of those that fall in the face of adversity. And many of us would stand back and say, 'what a weak man David was on this occasion; why didn't he take that sword and deal with Doeg, and the repercussions wouldn't have happened, and where was his confidence, why didn't he put his trust in God on that occasion?'

It's very easy to be critical of ours when they fail, isn't it? and unless we know the circumstances and details, there are many times when it's been said that unless we've walked in the other man's shoes, we really don't know the experiences of his heart. But David moved irrationally, and he did so and he learnt a very valuable lesson. I want us to look at some of the comments in Psalm 56. It seems to me that Psalm 56 may have been written after the fact, in the cave of Adullam. You'll notice in Psalm 57 which talks about David when he fled from Saul in the cave, I think the contents of Psalm 57 would suggest that that is the cave of Adullam and not the cave in Engedi which is later on in Psalm 142. Both of the psalms begin with the same thought, 'be merciful unto me, O God', both psalms, and we see also another similarity in the way in which these psalms appear, that David is very conscious of God in his life. I just want us to look at one or two little comments. He talks about it being a 'Michtam of David', that word 'Michtam' is a word which means 'to inscribe indelibly' and I think the experiences of moving into the Philistine territory, being captured by Achish and brought before him, that experience never left him, it was blazoned upon his mind, inscribed indelibly, it made a very deep and a lasting impression. David doesn't hide the dangers, verse 2, 'mine enemies would daily swallow me up, for they be many that fight against me, O Thou Most High'. Verse 13, 'For Thou hast delivered my soul from death; wilt Thou not deliver my feet from falling?', these were very real to David and then in verse 13 he says 'Thou hast delivered my soul from death', it's in the past tense and so suggesting that it was written a little later.

David has been provided with evidence showing there is no reason to fear. And we remember as it was displayed to us last night, what David did when he realized the danger in was in, he feigned himself mad. He frosted the mouth and he drooled like a

madman and Achish said, 'get him out of my presence'. But that wasn't the only thing that David did, b&s, verse 9, 'When I cry unto Thee, then shall mine enemies turn back; this I know, for God is for me', and he reminds us of Nehemiah, doesn't it? when he stood before the king as the king's cupbearer and the king said to him, 'you've got a sad countenance today, Nehemiah, what's wrong?' and he knew that there was a penalty for coming in before the king with a sad countenance; so it says 'he prayed to the God of heaven', in that instant he prayed. And here's David, standing before king Achish, realizing the terrible circumstances that he's brought upon himself, and he feigns himself mad but he cries in his heart unto God to be delivered from his enemies.

And Psalm 34 is another psalm of this period. Again the title is, 'when David changed his behaviour before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed', and look what Psalm 34 says, verse 4, 'I sought Yahweh and He heard me and He delivered me from all my fears'. David was frightened of Saul, he fled, and he became even more afraid when he came into the Philistines, and God delivered him from all his fears'. He prayed and God sent His angels, verse 7, 'the angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him', and because of this David could look with confidence to the future. Look at Psalm 56 again and verse 3, 'What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee', if this ever happens again, I know where my confidence is going to be; 'whatever time I am afraid, from now on, I will trust in Thee.

I want us to note the little phrase in verse 2, 'For they may be many that fight against me, O Thou Most High', we're used to seeing that phrase and thinking it's El Elyon, the Most High God; it isn't that phrase on this occasion, the word 'Most High' is the Hebrew word 'marowm'(4791) and it means 'to elevate' and it's the word that's used in Isaiah 57, you remember when he's talking about the exaltedness of God, in verse 15, 'For thus saith the high and lofty One, that's the word that is used here, and David recognized that God's exalted position, and any relationship to that position, must be on God's terms. And sometimes we hear phrases which bring God down to our level, and we tend to treat God as though He's some kind of 'buddy': He's the Creator of heaven and earth, He is high and exalted; He is the Most High, b&s, and we must recognize that in all our dealings with our Father. And David did!

Let's just go back to Psalm 34 again, you remember Isaiah 66? 'I dwell in a high and holy place, with them also who are of a contrite spirit, who are humbled and tremble at my Word', and there are the words in Psalm 34 and verse 17, 'The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles; Yahweh is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart and save such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivereth them out of them all'. And that word 'contrite' means 'to bruise' (1793), it's the word that is used in Isaiah 53 of the Lord Jesus Christ, a man who was despised and rejected of men, and it says, 'It pleased Yahweh to 'bruise' Him, it means 'to crush, to break apart and to break down', and that's what the flesh needs to have done to it, doesn't it? b&s, it needs to be crushed, destroyed, so we can recognize whose we are and whom we serve, and stand before

the Most High, that our hearts might be elevated into the heavenly places where they ought to be. Some of us refuse to be humbled during our experiences in life, just turn with me to Jeremiah chapter 44, where this word is used or the idea is used in verse 10, where He's talking to Israel who had experienced the almighty hand of God in their lives, and Jeremiah says, verse 10, 'they are not humbled even unto this day, neither have they feared, nor walked in my law, nor in my statutes, that I set before you and before your fathers'. And we refuse to be humbled, don't we, b&s? 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks', and there are many times that we go kicking and screaming all the way, through our difficult periods of life: resisting the Father's will, resisting the chastening hand that tries to correct us and turn us away from the direction in which we are going.

And Saul was one such man! who refused to be humbled, he challenged the throne of the Almighty as Amalek had done; he didn't recognize the Most High God, and although he was recommended as a king, as a man he still had that opportunity to change, but jealousy and pride caused him to further oppose God's purpose in persecuting David. What a contrast with David, b&s, just go back to Psalm 17, what a contrast with David: verse 3, 'Thou hast proved mine heart'. David had been chastened, 'Thou hast visited me in the night; Thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing: I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress', but the point from that verse has got to be trying him dearly and David was humbled by that experience. Here is a man who had been divinely ordained, he'd been anointed the king of Israel. He had been triumphant over the Philistines and the hand of God had been with him wherever he went, but David was not presumptuous nor was he arrogant and full of self-esteem, we read in Psalm 63 and verse 3, 'Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee', and there's a reference to the divine character, to God Manifestation. God's loving kindness is better than life, God's mercy, b&s, is far more valuable than the glory of this present evil life; David had his priorities right.

If we turn back now to Psalm 56 we read there at verse 13, 'For Thou hast delivered my soul from death; wilt Thou not deliver my feet from falling that I may walk in the light of the living?' The light of the living, he's not talking about a better life today, he's not talking about getting over the hump so that we might have a better more comfortable existence, David's talking about eternal matters. The RV margin puts it, 'I will walk before God in the light of the life', it's a term that's associated with eternal matters (you don't need to turn to it) but in Job chapter 33 and verse 30, he uses this term to bring back his soul from the pit, 'to be enlightened with the light of the living'. It's something associated with the resurrection and eternal life, b&s, that's what David's mind was still focused on, the things of the truth, the eternal matters! which went beyond the three score years and ten. And Jesus alludes to this in John chapter 8 and verse 12, 'Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world, he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of (and the original text is 'the life'); he shall have the light of the life'. David's ambition was eternal life, that's what he said at the end of Psalm 17, 'I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness', there was David's priority. He saw the difficulties, the burdens, the joys of this life as mere

stepping stones in the building of his character so that he might be fashioned for the glory of God in the future age. Our difficulties are designed for our eternal well-being and David recognized that! 'Thou hast proved me', and God's loving-kindnesses as far better than life.

There was an occasion in Matthew chapter 6 when Jesus attempted to teach His disciples to evaluate their priorities; and I've entitled Matthew 6 as TRUE MOTIVES AND LASTING VALUES, and that's what He's talking about. Of course, it's referring to the public appearances of the scribes and Pharisees, who did things so that everybody else would know how good they were. And yet, in verse 25 Jesus says, 'I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and is not the body than raiment?' And what Jesus is telling us is that 'the life' is eternal life, that's more important than the things that we have now; and the body is the time when this body of corruption shall be removed or changed into a body of incorruption, and that's the body we should be sustaining. 'Man should not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Father', and David says, 'I will be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness'.

There's a lovely little phrase in Psalm 56, sometimes we think that God might be so far detached from our circumstances, and in verse 8 David says, 'Thou tellest my wanderings: put Thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?' That word 'tellet' it's the Hebrew word 'caphor'(5608) it means 'to inscribe, to write down' and what David's saying is that God documents our life; every step of the way, b&s, God is documenting our ups and downs, a record of how we react. And we should be doing the same; we should be going through life and building upon the experiences of life and learning from those experiences. Then he says to God, once you've documented them, 'put Thou my tears into thy bottle' (store them up and take account of my responses). God has feelings, and He feels for our circumstances day by day, He enters into our trials and our tribulations. He said of Israel, 'My heart is turned within Me, how shall I give thee up, O Israel?' and when we feel ever so low and the difficulties of life become so burdensome that we don't know where to turn, we can remember that God is documenting those burdensome times and we can be like David and say, 'as soon as I am afraid, I will turn to you'. Would that we could say with David, 'I have trusted in thy mercy, my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I will sing unto Yahweh because He hath dealt bountifully with me'. Would that we could say like David, 'my times are in thy hands' and for 20 years, b&s, he waited for the fulfillment of one day, when he stood before his brethren as a young man and before Samuel, as the oil was anointing his head to be king, and it took him 20 years, but he could say at the end, 'my times are in your hands'.

God's going to work it out for us, b&s, in His good time. You and I have just got to be patient, and we've got to take one step at a time. When Israel were told to go in and take over the Promised Land, He didn't tell them to go and do it in a day, He said, I want you to do it little by little, step by step. And that's the way it takes, we can only choose

so much of the time, and we've got to deal with one problem, one day at a time. It's how we respond to God's hand in our life that makes all the difference to the end result. We can be like Saul and we can respond by opposing God's purpose and rejecting His Word. We can be like Jonathan and we can accept our lot in life and diminish in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ. Or we can be like David and we can make God our strength, and our source of comfort through listening to His Word on a daily basis, and we're all going to encounter our souls, there will always be Doegs in our midst, there will be the Ziphites, our brethren who betray us and let us down; but they're all there for a purpose, b&s, they're all there for a reason. Remember what Paul says in Romans chapter 9, he says, in a great house there are some vessels for honour and dishonour, verse 21, 'Hath not the Potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?' Then he says, 'What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make known His power, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath' (and we think, well, why would God want to endure with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath?) read on, 'that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory. Even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles'. So when we see the wicked prospering, and we look around us and those that oppose the will of God, seem to be getting on a lot better than ourselves, God is enduring those vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, that the long-suffering of God might be extended to us, that His mercy might impress upon us, that today is the day of opportunity. It took 20 years from the anointing to the time when David received the throne; David had experienced every facet of life, he had his ups and he had his downs, and every day was a learning experience. And the only constant thing in David's life with all its twists and turns, was God!

And I would like us to leave this place, this morning, b&s, by learning the lesson of God; that the goodness of God endureth continually, and it is up to us, b&s, to walk in the light of His countenance, learning from the experiences of our life, and then putting them into practice, that we might show mercy to one another, as our Father shows mercy to us!