

Thankfulness for Jesus Christ

In my last three articles I've sought to unpack the glorious message of Psalm 138. This Psalm, written by king David, is wonderfully encouraging. It has much to say about whether we approach the events of our lives with the unhealthy fear of man or a healthy fear (reverence) of God. There are so many obstacles, difficulties and trials that we face in our daily lives that can bring about differing degrees of uncertainty. And yet, Christians know that God is always with us, for us and he's always trustworthy. He gives us all that we need to live thankful lives from the heart.

Toward the end of my last article I began to touch on the fact that this Psalm, in part, points forward from David's lifetime to the time of great David's greater Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. God made a covenant with David (2 Samuel 7:16) which promises a kingdom that stretches forward into the future. "Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever." The fullness of this covenant promise could not have been fulfilled in king David alone but pointed forward to the only perfect and eternal King, Jesus Christ (Ps. 2:6; Mt. 2:2; 9:27; 27:11). Luke records words that were spoken to Mary by the angel Gabriel that tie together the throne of David with the rule of Jesus.

"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1:31-33) Although Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18), at the present time the rule of Jesus is most clearly seen in his church (John 10:27).

David concludes Psalm 138 with the confidence that God will not abandon his purpose for or the work that he has begun in his people. "The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me....Do not forsake the work of your hands." (Psalm 138:8) We see these same truths taught in the New Testament. In Philippians 1:6 Paul writes, "And I am sure of this that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus." Can we know what God's purpose is for us? Listen to these words of Paul from Romans 8:28-29: "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son..." God's ultimate purpose for all Christians is that we're growing to be like Jesus Christ. "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image...." (2 Corinthians 3:18a)

As we begin to draw this Psalm to a conclusion I want to give us four points of application. These points are not meant to be exhaustive but should be helpful for us as we consider what we've learned from this Psalm.

—David is reminding us of the importance of the worship of our Covenant God with our "whole heart." (vs. 1) What are some things that can distract us from giving ourselves totally to God in

public worship as well as in all of life worship?

We may need to regularly set aside some time for meditating on God's wonderful blessings including his "covenant love and faithfulness." (vss. 2, 7)

—Are we encouraged to be reminded that God hears and answers the prayers of his people? We should draw strength, by God's grace, as we recall God's promises and answers to our prayers. As we're strengthened we can continue to turn away from ongoing unhealthy fear and anxiety (vs. 3).

—We want to be in regular prayer for the kingdom to come in the hearts and lives of those who don't yet worship King Jesus (vss. 4-5).

—Be encouraged that God will fulfill his purpose for us to grow in likeness to Jesus Christ (vs. 8). Although that growth will seem slow at times, God never fails or falters.

May we be encouraged by the truths that we've seen from Psalm 138. Good theology is not merely something that we learn, but something that should penetrate our hearts and positively change our lives. May we continue to rest in and be thankful for Jesus Christ who rules and reigns forever!