

It's the hope that kills you

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[0 : 00] We'll do keep on Psalm 21. You'll see why there is a little bit of a look back at Psalm 20. These two psalms are connected.

So we will look a little bit back at Psalm 20 as well. I'm just going to pray for us as we begin to look at God's Word together and ask for help from Him to think about what this psalm means for our lives.

Lord Jesus, we thank You for the Bible. We thank You that it is the way that You have ordained to speak to us. And we pray that You would give us ears to hear and eyes to see and hearts to know, to listen.

And that You would speak to us, we would know You. And that we would be built up and encouraged and equipped and challenged and rebuked and trained so that we would be trained for every good work, trained in righteousness.

So bless us now in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. So I have a quote to begin with from an American author.

[1 : 03] She wrote this quite a few years back. She's called Jennifer Donnelly. And she wrote this. She said, I don't like hope very much. In fact, I hate it.

She said, It's the crystal meth of emotions. It hooks you fast and kills you hard. It's bad news. The worst. It's sharp sticks and cherry bombs.

When hope shows up, it's only a matter of time until someone gets hurt. The question, is she right? What she's really talking about, and what we've kind of looked at a little bit with the kids, is she's talking about the hurt caused by disappointment. And her solution is, well, if you don't hope in anything, then you can't experience disappointment.

And who hasn't experienced disappointments? If we have hope, is it just a matter of time until you get hurt because you've been disappointed by life?

[2 : 08] That is what Jennifer Donnelly sort of thinks is the right way to live. I think we're going to say that the look at why we should have hope, because actually, you think about it, to be completely hopeless is a slippery path.

It is dangerous. It makes the world a bleak place to live, to live with no hope at all. If that is the mindset or your view, a perspective, how you look at the world, it will affect how you think, how we come at life.

And yet, despite knowing that, there is a degree of truth, isn't there, at the same time to what Jennifer Donnelly says. And the reason there is a degree of truth is because that will be true if you place all your hope in something that's not certain.

She is right if you place your hope in something that's not certain. We always need to be stopping and checking ourselves. What are we putting our hope in?

What are we putting our hope in? Maybe for the next five to ten years of life. And is it something that's certain and secure? Is it something that might disappoint? And how will that affect you or us if that thing didn't happen?

[3 : 31] That's why Psalm 21 is so relevant for us today if we ever feel like that because it is a song full of hope. Full of hope. Packed to the brim. And so as we look at this song, what we see is we see an Israelite nation singing the Psalm of David who wrote it, the king.

Why they were so hopeful and it's opposite to the sort of reasons that Jennifer Donnelly gives, isn't it? It's not hope that disappoints, not hope that hooks and kills, not hope that ends up hurting, but it is hope that is built on something concrete that can be depended on which makes the Israelites sing and praise.

As we're looking at this psalm, it's just worth noting, these are printed, Psalm 20. Psalm 20 and 21, they actually come together as a pair. And the thing that's happened, the incident that happens in between these two psalms is that King David and the army go off to battle.

Psalm 20 is a prayer that is sung and prayed before King David and his army go off to battle. And Psalm 21 is sung after they've won the battle.

Psalm 20 before, Psalm 21 after they've come back. And you see how they connect. In Psalm 20, God's people, the Israelites, you can flip it, it's just on the other side of the sheet I've handed out, they're praying and petitioning and asking God to bless their king, to bless King David.

[5 : 03] The one that we're looking on follows on from that prayer as a victory song. It's written by King David for God's people joined together and praised the Lord for answering their prayers that they prayed before.

And we see that they praise the Lord for two things. They praise God for how he's acted towards their king in their recent victory.

But they also praise knowing that their future is secure as well. Knowing that their future battles involving their king will go the same way as the last one.

And all of it tied together by remembering that the thing that brings about the victory is the Lord's strength, his power. It is his might that has done this, that has answered their prayers and given their king victory.

Look with me at the beginning and the end of the Psalm 21, verse 1. Right at the beginning, verse 1, the king rejoices in your strength, Lord. And right at the end, verse 13, be exalted in your strength, Lord.

[6 : 10] We will sing and praise your might. It is the Lord's strength. It is the Lord who has given the victory to David. The people praise the Lord because he's strong and David is strong in battle because of the Lord's strength.

But what we notice is that as we see it, it's actually answering prayers from the previous Psalm. You just look with me in verse 2 of Psalm 20 and we see the language echoes the request.

Sorry, verse 2 of Psalm 21. You see what he says? You have granted him his heart's desire and have not withheld the request of his lips.

Now flip over to verse 4. That's exactly what they asked for. May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed. The praise is that they've asked that the king would have all the desire of his heart and now he does.

Now he has. It follows on from the battle. They can praise because they remember what they prayed before and now they can see the fruit of their prayers. They're praising God.

[7 : 20] We prayed and he's answered. We have our king has the victory. And so the thing that they praise for, the first thing is looking how God has answered their prayers for their king.

The godly plans, the requests have succeeded. This is a reason to celebrate. They prayed for their king, the prayers have been answered. And yet what comes next I think is perhaps a little bit unexpected, isn't it?

If the psalm finished at verse 2 you'd think well it'd sound you know it'd finish in a good place. But the people prayed for God to answer with great victory and you know hallelujah he's got they've got a victory the king has the king's prayers have been answered but what we see is more is actually given to the king than he expects.

You think of a sporting competition there's the world club cup on at the minute but during a world cup sporting competition team sport you think the aim of the captain is to lead their team to win that trophy.

If that were ever to happen to Scotland or England the captain and the whole team they receive the trophy but actually you see they receive more.

[8 : 48] You imagine what would happen if we're going to go with it. You imagine what would happen if Scotland won a major competition. You can picture the scene Edinburgh airport as you know the plane is coming to land.

It would be jammed. It would be totally jammed the winning team plane lands the media is going crazy the whole of Scotland is having a national party for weeks.

A few years ago now when New Zealand won the Rugby World Cup the airport staff when the team were walking off the plane the airport staff did the hacker on the runway as the team got off the plane.

You see what they receive is not just the trophy but there is honour there is respect there is admiration and the names of the team they say are immortalized into sporting folklore they go down in history that's exactly what we see God gives to King David through his victory he receives more verse 3-6 David is richly blessed more than he expected look with me from verse 3 you came to greet him with rich blessings placed a crown of pure gold on his head he asked you for life you gave it to him length of days forever and ever through the victories you gave his glory is great you bestow on him splendor and majesty surely you have granted him unending blessings and made him glad with the joy of your presence the blessings!

given to the king you see what's happening here in that action following the victories God is saying to all of the people who are there this is my man this is my man in you know in this country in the UK the highest honour I think is probably getting knighted that's one of the ways that you get honour and acclaim isn't it you get knighted what do we have here David receives!

[11 : 01] There is nothing higher is there no other honour that is greater life forever and ever glory splendour and majesty this list of gifts that goes on and on the name of the king becomes the highest name in the land surely you have granted him unending blessings made him glad with the joy of your presence having God with him forever that will make him full of joy no matter where he goes what he does God will be his king wherever he goes and forever he's richly blessed in the sporting world there is a new world cup winning captain every four years the victory and success is short lived but that's not so with God's victory yet David will fight more battles it begs the question what is meant by unending blessings life length of days forever!

you see the people know David knows that eventually he will die and yet what we have here is pointing to something more because we know that the promise given to King David is that the kingly line will continue forever in his family a promise given to David in 2 Samuel 7 the victory all the blessings the eternal never ending blessings that the Lord gives to David they all point to the victory and the never ending blessings that the Lord has given to Jesus who comes in his family line when Yahweh the Lord the God of the Bible will raise Jesus the future heir and give him victory over our biggest enemy all of this why why given to Jesus for infinite joy that he would be glad with the joy of the Lord's presence all the desires of Jesus heart met not a request that has been withheld from his lips a crown indeed placed on the head of the

Lord Jesus because he is our king length of days forever and ever that's how long his reign will be you see that's what it's really pointing to indeed all the glory belongs to him all the splendor all the majesty he's the most blessed one it is Jesus that is full of joy and rejoices in the Lord's strength sitting at his right hand all these blessings given to Jesus because of his obedience and going to the cross to defeat death that's why he is the name above all names that's why he is lifted high and forever praised and glorified that's why because it is God like that gives David the victory here gives the victory to his son in raising him from the dead the Lord is strong and mighty to give victory and blessings forever to his king perhaps there is one more question well why all this lavish over the top giving why all the blessing well it comes down to verse seven why for the king trusts in the lord through the unfailing love of the most high he will not be shaken the unfailing love of the most high the love of

God the Lord God loves his king he loves king David and he loves his son our king Jesus and that's what we see in verse seven the reason God gives victory the reason God is strong for his king! the reason! He blesses his king it's all because he loves him because he loves the king if you're a follower of Jesus and you trust in him as your lord and saviour then his death he died was in your place then what we know is that the blessings that we see here for the king are actually your blessings!

[15 : 06] here today as well they're our blessings because he is our king and represents us when the captain of a nation wins it isn't just the captain of the team that wins isn't it that lifts the trophy what happens is the whole of the country lifts it with him if Andy Robertson the captain of Scotland lifts an international trophy the whole nation can say we have won it isn't just him but the whole nation can say that even though they never kicked a ball Jesus is the captain of our team he's the captain of salvation and he's lifted the salvation trophy and we the church are his people and we identify with our captain Jesus is our captain and we identify with him he's our man he's our captain he's our king he's our man and so when he wins we can say that we have won in him he takes on our sinfulness our death he wins and we win with him we get the blessings and gifts fit for a king we are the ones who are clothed with honor and glory and majesty and splendor we're the ones who

will get a crown of pure gold placed on our heads will be desires of our heart the requests of our lips because we come in his name everything given to the king is given to us in him this is a reason to hope this is a reason to hope because it's it's not wishful thinking it's not something that we can we'll get disappointed by that will maybe come through because it's certain we praise

God because we look back at the cross we see the victory and the blessings that have been given to our king in abundance and that there are blessings as well in Christ and all because God loves his king and because we're in him he loves us he showers us with gifts fit for a king with a never failing love so we praise God for what he's!

done we look back! second thing that we praise God for is for his victories to come the second half of the psalm it switches you'll notice that from verse 8 it's still praising God but looking to what God will do in the future battles that his king will face the first half is praising God looking back the rest is praising God but looking forward everybody I think you know without exception spends time living in our past nostalgia and thinking back or imagining what the future may hold people find it the hardest to live in the present time will even itself out and you can see where that's attractive right because it tries to make sense of our world it even seems fair doesn't it people get what they deserve but the thing is we all know life doesn't really work out that way for all the promises that karma offers it's just not realistic bad people get away with stuff and seemingly good people suffer unfortunately that is reality and the truth of that if we don't have something to put our hope in is what leaves us with hopelessness true hope can only ever arise if we are able to look back and look forward and know that God will be consistent through his son in the way he will act through us today and for our future verse 8-12 shows that for

Israel God's people who trust that the Lord will act in the same way with their future enemies they face with the way he's acted in the past their king will face enemies and they will praise him for the future victories you notice how many times the word will occurs they don't talk what might happen or if something will happen but they talk of what will happen verse 8 9 you will the Lord will swallow his fire will construct you verse 10 you will destroy verse 12 you will make them turn their backs it's will something you will do it is a future certainty certainty I think we get the point their trust is not actually in question it's not ifs buts or maybes but what will happen he's come through on his promises before his love for his people goes on his promises will remain and this is what he will do what his mighty strength does towards them not wishful thinking and unrealistic like karma but definite and certain!

for their enemies we see it discovers it destroys and it defeats it discovers it destroys and it defeats look me in verse 8 we see that the Lord's strength discovers your hand will lay hold on all your enemies your right hand will seize your foes another translation of those phrases lay hold and seize is actually find out your hand will find out all your enemies it will find out your foes it means there will be no ambushes for King David when he goes into battle he will never be surprised or taken aback because God goes before him and discovers his enemies and lays all their plans out they can't hide from him they can't get away they can't cover up God is watching every move they make he'll lay hold of them he'll find them out and seize them second thing we see in verse nine he will destroy them when you appear for battle when

[22 : 00] King David readies himself he will win the battle any future victory is so secure that's how easy it will be for his king because the Lord is going before them it's picture language that we get here that the victory is so certain that this is what David when David goes into battle he will definitely come out victorious that's how easy victory will be for his king he will destroy the enemies with such ease and then finally in verse 11 we see not just destroy but defeat though they plot evil against you and devise wicked schemes they cannot succeed you make them turn their backs when you aim at them withdrawn but they can't succeed he will thwart and foil trick in their playbook there is nothing new no sort of trickery that will outwit or outfox the living God and what that means is that it won't outfox

King David it won't outfox the king God discovers King David's enemies he destroys them and defeats their plans the future is secure the future is secure as followers of Jesus we do not fight with weapons of combat we don't fight with weapon combat but we do fight spiritually the cross is the moment where the war was won and where the king destroyed and defeated the enemy's plans and yet we are waiting for the final realization of that victory in the end it's a little bit like you think of world war two for those who know your history June the 6th 1944 in world war two was the DJ landing the largest seaborne invasion in history and it is said by historians that the war was won on

that day that was the victory the clincher where from that day it was just it was obvious who was going to win on that day an important battle and yet the war didn't finish in Europe until the 8th May 1945 a year later 11 months VE day victory in Europe so for 11 months even though it was won! There were skirmishes!

hard fighting to finish the job but D Day was the significant moment the cross is our D Day when the victory was won and yet here we are still fighting waiting for the final day of victory not VE day but when the Lord Jesus returns that will be victory for the church we know it will come but we still got to fight during that period we've got to fight with prayer we've got to fight for holiness fight for the kingdom of God bring peace where there is discord and strive with the message of the gospel the good news that brings the kingdom of God to our world bringing hope to our world God in God in the end the day will come when all evil will be dealt with in its entirety when we know it won't win God will not stand by and watch the brutality in our world he doesn't the inhumane ways that people have and do treat each other he doesn't sit there and twiddle his thumbs and just let people get on with misery and terror he acts he does act and there's that continuing battle the little skirmishes but we know the future is secure because of the victory that has gone in the past we can have confidence we can have hope this is a song of praise it's a song of hope it's a psalm that looks forward because it looks back the

Lord has been faithful in the past because he loves his king he loves his son and he'll be faithful in the future through the continued work of the king who works through us God's kingdom will come is coming and will clear up all our mess all the mess in our world will be vanquished all the enemies destroyed and yet we must fight until that day spiritually fighting with the weapons that he's given us the message of the gospel and prayer this is our great hope this is our great hope that certain it is short it is unshakable we can praise the Lord because when we look at Jesus it helps us to look forward the living God saves his king and he saves those who trust in him Jesus is our captain and we find ourselves in him we identify with him and so when we feel hopeless when we feel that perhaps karma is the right answer or maybe if we feel like

[27 : 12] Jennifer Donnelly who says that she hates hope that it hooks and kills when we feel disappointed the place to look the place to go is to go here to go to Psalm 21 and to sing it knowing that it talks that the king that it points to is our king is your king is my king is king Jesus reigning you look at him you see him alive death no more and if the living God can defeat death the biggest enemy we can trust him for our future that is the answer to hopelessness we hope in something that doesn't fail it doesn't leave a bitter taste it doesn't leave hurt because God loves his king He loves!

us we join with God's people we join with God's people singing the last verse be exalted oh Lord in your strength in your strength because in your strength you saved your king you rose him from the dead and in your strength our future is secure and all the enemies that we face will be destroyed be exalted oh Lord in your strength we will sing and praise your might let's pray almighty God we come to you rejoicing because of king Jesus we come rejoicing because how great is the joy in the victories that you give that you have not held the request of any of

Jesus any request that has come from Jesus lips you give him his heart desire you have placed a crown on his head you have given life forever you have given him victory and ending blessings and peace forevermore and we trust in you and so every blessing that we see here is ours in Christ and so we praise you and I pray that however we're feeling today if we're feeling a little bit hopeless or if we're ever tempted to and we know that that will come Lord direct us to sing the truths that we see here to you and we pray that that would lift our spirits that you would edify and nurture us and help us to be lifted out of ourselves so that we can see that the future we have is certain because of the way that you've acted in the past through your king and so we pray for your blessing and we do indeed exalt your name we sing and praise your might in Jesus name amen