

Ben Libby
 Sermon
 September 6th, the 14th Sunday after Pentecost

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, and for training in righteousness, AMEN. Our sermon text for this morning comes from Psalm 33, beginning at verse 10:

The Lord wrecks the plan of the nations. He hinders the intentions of the peoples. 11 The plan of the Lord stands forever. The intentions of his heart stand through all generations. 12 How blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose to be his possession. 13 From heaven the Lord observes. He sees all the children of Adam. 14 From his throne room he looks at all the inhabitants of earth. 15 He alone is the one who shapes all their hearts. He understands all their deeds. 16 No king is saved by the great size of his army. No hero is rescued by his great strength. 17 You cannot rely on a horse to save you. Its great strength will not deliver you. 18 Look, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who wait for his mercy. 19 He will deliver their souls from death. He keeps them alive in famine. 20 Our souls wait for the Lord. He is our help and our shield. 21 Yes, in him our heart rejoices, because we trust in his holy name. 22 May your mercy, O Lord, be on us, even as we wait confidently for you.

This is the Word of The LORD!!! The congregation may be seated...Mercy, Grace, and Peace ARE YOURS from your God and Father and your Savior from sin, Jesus Christ. Dear fellow Redeemed...

"Wait til your Father gets home!" For a disobedient child, are there any worse words than these? Not only do you know that punishment is forthcoming, but you also have to suffer through the moments until it arrives. I remember my childish response to this was trying to run and hide or somehow get out of it, but it was pretty final when these words were spoken. These are terrifying words to hear because the suspense kills.

But, these words do not always have to be bad. "Father coming home" doesn't necessarily need to be a bad thing. "Wait til your Father gets home...he is bringing home a pizza/he has your allowance/he is bringing home a puppy!" Those things would make the waiting as equally agonizing but in a good way. You couldn't wait for the sounds of his car coming into the garage. Your only thought at that point would be "Dad, just get here already!"

The fact of the matter is that we do not have to wait for our heavenly Father ever. We know that He is omnipresent and always with us. We know that He is

always a prayer away. Any time anything should arise, the only thing it takes for us to make a petition to God is words. Sometimes, not even that. You don't have to say words to pray to God, you only have to think them. When it comes to God, Father is always home. But doesn't that mean something terrifying if we are expecting punishment?

In our sermon text today, a plea is expressed. It is a common thought throughout Scripture. It is expressed here in verse 20 **Our souls wait for the Lord**. Why is that thought so common? We know that He is everywhere, all-knowing, and all-powerful. Why do we wait? We wait because we must. We wait because we know He will come. We wait for the sounds of His deliverance. The prospect of God coming home is a terrifying one to the sinner. But to those who have faith in Jesus, it is sweet relief. Quite simply, it is mercy! - MAY THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AND THE MEDITATIONS OF OUR HEARTS BE ACCEPTABLE IN YOUR SIGHT O LORD, OUR STRENGTH AND OUR REDEEMER, AMEN!!!-

Probably, the best-known verse of this Psalm is verse 12. **How blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose to be his possession.** I think it is natural for anyone reading this psalm to ask a question here. "Does my nation resemble what the Psalmist says? Are we a nation that belongs to the LORD?" What would you say?

To me, it really depends on where you are coming from. Was our country founded upon Christian values? Certainly. But, those values did not exist in a vacuum. Is Christianity the predominant religion of our country? Yes. But you wouldn't know it by looking at it. Are we this chosen nation of God? No, and yes. But more on that later.

This Psalm really speaks to the Omniscient and Omnipotent nature of our LORD. **13 From heaven the Lord observes. He sees all the children of Adam. 14 From his throne room he looks at all the inhabitants of earth. 15 He alone is the one who shapes all their hearts. He understands all their deeds.**

When it comes to these aspects of God, are they good or bad? Again this depends on where you are coming from. To those who depend on the LORD for deliverance, it is a great comfort that He is everywhere at all times. To those who are in grave danger, it is a great blessing to know that their God is all-powerful. But at the same time, isn't it a bit frightening? He truly is in all places at all times. He misses nothing. And there's no limit on the power He has to seek vengeance.

In this age of 24-hour surveillance, body cams, and video cameras in everyone's pocket, it seems like we are always being watched. But sinners will always try to find a blind spot. We treasure privacy and concealment. People will pay good money to have their data protected. But why is that? Isn't it, to more or less a degree so that they can get away with more? So no one digs up any skeletons in their closets? It seems like everything is public record these days. Something you said 10 years ago can come back to bite you today. Yet, we always think that we can get it away with it.

But really, privacy is a farce. There is no hiding from God. He sees all, nothing is hidden from Him. He is the I AM in the sky. The book of Job reiterates the thoughts of this Psalm: **Job 34:21 "For His eyes are upon the ways of a man, And He sees all his steps.**

And yet, we are still here. Despite all of our foolish and sinful ways, we are still here. God is here too. It can be hard to see sometimes. God's mercy is quite hard to understand fully. His ways or not our ways, nor are His thoughts the same as our thoughts. Someone might theorize, "If what I am about to do is displeasing to God, then He would strike me down. If He is all-seeing and all-powerful, and what I did was wrong, then I would be destroyed. The fact that I did what I did and am still standing is proof of either that what I did was in fact not wrong or that God doesn't exist!" This is truly a flawed and sinful way of thinking. It doesn't take into account the fact that God is merciful and long-suffering.

16 No king is saved by the great size of his army. No hero is rescued by his great strength. 17 You cannot rely on a horse to save you. Its great strength will not deliver you.

Strength can be measured in all kinds of different ways. Real strength is not always found in a swift attempt at retaliation. It is not being the loudest voice in the room. It is not "might makes right". Rather, real strength is found in mercy and restraint. Real strength is found in the truth, whether it is boomed or still small. Real strength is found in meekness and weakness.

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians, **9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2Co 12:9-10 NKJ)**

In this world, bad things happen. The strong prey on the weak. Loved ones get sick. Bad things happen to good people. It seems to us that the wicked get away

with everything and that the innocent get treated cruelly. But, as Paul reminds us there, God's strength is made perfect in weakness.

And that is why this plea is so common throughout scripture and time. **Our souls wait for the Lord.** We know that eventually, God will show up. Yes, He is always here. We know this by faith. Just because things do not always go our way doesn't mean that God is not here. It may seem like it, but it's not true. It seems like powers and forces plot and rage, and our God is indifferent. But this is simply not true. We know God will show up. For us, it is just a matter of waiting for it.

The Lord wrecks the plan of the nations. He hinders the intentions of the peoples. 11 The plan of the Lord stands forever. The intentions of his heart stand through all generations.

We like control. We like everything in a neat and tidy box. But things don't always work that way. In fact, there is really very little that we can control. Being ok with the fact that we are not in control is what faith is. It is admitting, "I want this to happen, but I know that whatever happens will be in my best interest". Faith is trust that the LORD knows what He is doing. Faith is saying the same Words that Jesus prayed in the garden, **"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."** (Mat 26:39 NKJ)

It was in that Man who prayed those Words where we see the ultimate example of **The plan of the Lord stands forever.** Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of strength being made perfect in weakness. He was true God while also being true man. He had every weakness that we have, yet He never sinned. He was all-powerful, we see that countless times throughout countless miracles. But when it came time for Him to suffer, He did. He didn't wave His omnipotent hand to remove Himself from danger. He endured it.

Real strength is not always found in a swift attempt at retaliation. Jesus prayed on the cross that God would not charge that sin against those who put Him there. Real strength is not being the loudest voice in the room. Jesus hardly spoke during His trial, even though He was in the right. Real strength is not "might

makes right". Jesus was both might and right, yet He tolerated torture. Why did He do all of this? Because He trusted in God's plan because He knew what this Psalm said was true. **The plan of the Lord stands forever.**

18 Look, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who wait for his mercy. 19 He will deliver their souls from death. He keeps them alive in famine.

God indeed sees all. He misses nothing. It is our basic, primal instinct to try and hide from God. When Adam and Eve first fell away in the garden, they tried to hide themselves from God, for they were ashamed. It is funny how hopeless that basic instinct is. You simply cannot hide your sin from God. But God can!

God sees all. He saw how sinful we are were. But just as God is all-knowing, so also is He all-loving and merciful. God devised a way to hide our sin from His sight. The answer would be found in the Seed of the woman.

It is in Jesus Christ where our sin is hidden. It is in Jesus Christ where true deliverance is found. Yes, God cannot and will not tolerate sin. That is why Jesus came to this earth and went to the cross. On the cross, God poured out His wrath for sin on the sinless Son of God. That was the plan that stands forever, that was where the intentions of His heart stands through all generations. But people had to wait for it! All those before the crucifixion were hoping and trusting that what God said would come. It did. It is finished. We can look back on the cross and see where our forgiveness was earned. Now, we too shall wait. We now wait confidently for Jesus to return and take us to be with Him in heaven.

In the meantime, we still have the promise of deliverance. It has always been the same promise. It was true for the Psalmist when he wrote these words, and it is the same for us here today. **19 He will deliver their souls from death. He keeps them alive in famine. 20 Our souls wait for the Lord. He is our help and our shield.**

God truly does deliver our souls from death and famine. Famine can be anything that might happen to

us in this vale of tears. He is our shield and help. That is, He is always with us to deliver us from any evil that might befall us. That doesn't mean that we are invincible. Far from it. Invincibility is not real strength because it really doesn't exist. Will we suffer? Yeah, that tends to happen in this vale of tears. But we know that we will not be given more than we can handle. **13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1Co 10:13 NKJ)**

But even more than delivering us from famine, the LORD delivers our souls from death. That was why Jesus went to the cross. Once that was finished, so too was our deliverance complete. We are now are His own dear children. No matter what happens to us now, no matter what, our future is secure in Christ!

It is through these delivered eyes where verse 12 becomes more clear. **12 How blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose to be his possession.**

When we think of these words, don't try to shoehorn America in there. This is talking about you, but not specifically you as an American. This is talking about Israel, but not that land in the Mediterranean. It is talking about the spiritual Israel, the heavenly Jerusalem. Dear Christian, you are a citizen of that nation! **But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. (Heb 11:16 NKJ)**

How do we know that we are citizens of this nation? We have proof. We have the Word, which makes you claim clear. We had proof here yesterday when we baptized Brooklyn Conrad. She was washed of our sin and became a child of God, just like you have been. We have further proof coming in a few minutes when we will partake of the body and blood of the Savior. This is all proof that heaven is our home. This is all proof that our souls have truly delivered from death!

And so, we wait. We wait with patience. We wait with suffering. We wait because we must. We wait because our LORD is worth waiting for. He always brings good things, and He never fails to arrive.

21 Yes, in him our heart rejoices, because we trust in his holy name. 22 May your mercy, O Lord, be on us, even as we wait confidently for you.

"Wait til your Father gets home!" This is both terrifying and joyous. To our rebellious sinful nature, the suspense is killing. We know what is coming our way. It is not good. But when He does get here, it is not in terror or fear. It is with comfort and everlasting joy. **9 And it will be said in that day: "Behold, this is our God; We have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the LORD; We have waited for Him; We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." (Isa 25:9 NKJ)**

We are not waiting in suspense, rather anticipation. We are not bracing for impending doom, rather we are waiting in quiet confidence. The reason for this change is Jesus. He took all the punishment that headed our way, and now we have His holy righteousness attributed to us. That is the mercy of God in action. Even now we can hear the sounds of deliverance heading down the driveway. It seems like we have been waiting forever, but it is simply a blink of the eye in the long run. Our deliverance will far outweigh our suffering. All praise and thanks be to our all-seeing, all-powerful LORD and our deliverer, Jesus Christ. May your mercy, O LORD, be on us, even as we wait confidently for you. AMEN