

**Sermon Series: “Lessons from King David on Thanksgiving”**  
**“The Present”**  
**Pastor Norwood N. “Woody” Hingle III, Ph.D.**  
**Sunday, November 14, 2021**

There is nothing like a firm foundation to make one feel secure. In New Orleans, we know about the need for a firm foundation. E.g., I recall after Hurricane Katrina I drove around the London Ave. Canal area, and saw a lot of damaged homes, but then I saw something I did not expect— I saw a house on a slab that the currents had pushed out into the middle of the street! That foundation was apparently not very secure— or secure enough. E.g., I have also seen houses with cracked foundations, where as you walk in the house you feel the drift to one side of the room! There is a great need for a firm foundation in New Orleans, and that is why when a new house is being built we have what is in effect telephone poles knocked 30 feet down in the ground to secure the foundation. The reason why we have such trouble with foundations in the New Orleans area is that we have soft soil from swampy areas, not hard, rocky soil as in other areas of our nation— I am no expert on this; this is what I am told. The same can be true for our lives. Is the focus of our lives on unfirm, soft things, or on solid rock? King David knows the importance of this question.

READ 2 Samuel 22:1-4 (p. 297)

**CONTEXT:** King David has had a number of victories in his life—he has been saved from King Saul who wanted to kill him, he defeated Goliath, he subdued Israel’s regular enemy the Philistines, and he had become the ruler of both Judah and Israel. He now reflects on his present life.

READ v 1. “King David was at the pinnacle of his power, and to praise God he did not wait/procrastinate. Cf. Luke 17:11-19.” Have you ever gone through a crisis situation and you prayed about it, and then everything worked out ok, and you forgot to acknowledge the Lord? It is easy to do. E.g., I recall years ago when I was in seminary a youth from the youth group with which I worked came to see me and wanted to talk about some troubling things in his life, so we prayed about it and gave it to the Lord, and I recall the Lord provided for him, and that afterward he really wasn’t interested in spiritual things and following the Lord. E.g., I have seen times in the past for me as a pastor where I pray for people during a tough time, and we see the Lord’s gracious hand in working out the situation, and then I didn’t follow up with the person to say a prayer of thanks for the Lord’s provision. I have learned to be sure to acknowledge the Lord in prayer in order to say thanks to Him. Sometimes we are not in a crisis, but things are all going well— and amazingly we forget the Lord. E.g., recently Elena and I went to see the fall foliage in eastern Tennessee, Gatlinburg area, and on our first day there Elena and I drove around and were in awe at the beauty of the mountains in their autumn glory. On the next day we are about to head out in a hurry to drive some more after breakfast at the hotel, I had a rushed devotional time with not much prayer, and then the Holy Spirit confronted me— hey Woody, you are captivated by the autumn beauty of God, but not so much with the God of the autumn beauty. The thing is, the Holy Spirit was right. So I decided to slow down and just spend some time on my knees in prayer and thank Him for the

wonderful opportunity to see His amazing creative work— one mountain view looked like a patch-work quilt. It is an unfortunate part of our human nature that we rush through the present with all its worries, joys, obligations, and forget the Lord. Jesus knew what that was like. In Luke 17:11-19 He encounters 10 lepers who ask Him to have mercy on them, and He tells them to go to Jerusalem to see the priests, and as they go they are healed, and one of the 10 turns back to thank Jesus. Jesus remarks, hey, didn't I heal 10, and only one returned? And it turned out that that one person was a Samaritan! We need not wait or procrastinate in giving thanks to the Lord for our present blessings— King David did not!

READ vv 2-3. “Because God saved him from his enemies, King David worshipped God by addressing Him with words which describe Him, like Rock, Refuge, and Rescuer. Cf. Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 46:1; Isaiah 43:3,14. Of especial interest is 1 Samuel 23:25-28.” It is interesting that this entire song of King David in 2 Samuel 22 is found basically in Psalm 18. The ideas of God as Rock, Refuge, and Rescuer are found littered throughout the Old Testament. Such words describe who He is. King David knew how safe big rocks could be. In 1 Samuel 23:25-28 we read, “Saul and his men went to search for him [David]. When David was told, he went down to the rock and stayed in the wilderness of Maon. When Saul heard that, he pursued David into the wilderness of Maon. Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain. David was hurrying to get away from Saul, while Saul and his men were closing in on David and his men to capture them. Then an messenger came to Saul, saying, ‘Hurry and come; for the Philistines have made a raid on the land. So Saul stopped pursuing David, and went against the Philistines; therefore that place was called the Rock of Escape.” God is like this rock where King David found safety. Have you ever needed a rock of refuge, and place of safety? E.g., I recall a few years ago we were on a youth event at Gulf Islands Waterpark in

Gulfport, MS, and everyone was enjoying the slides and lazy river, and then all of a sudden there was a terrific thunder and lightning storm, and the rain came down in buckets, and it seemed everyone came under a not-very-big picnic table area that had a roof but no walls; everyone crammed into the area while the storm came through, and it was reassuring to be in a safe place away from the elements. Have you ever felt like you needed rescuing? It can not only be a physical rescue needed, but also a personal or emotional one. E.g., I recall when Elena and I moved to Aberdeen and I began my research for Ph.D., I was overwhelmed and pretty unsure of myself— plus we were renovating a flat and buying a computer, all of which I had never previously done. I went to a church service one Sunday and they asked people to come forward who needed prayer at the end of the service. Well, I definitely needed prayer. And a woman came up to pray for me, and she did not know me well at all, and she prayed in effect by saying, “God wants you to know that like a long distance runner runs a race, He will see you through your situation.” I was taken aback— she did not know me that much, but the words she said through the Holy Spirit touched me deeply, and comforted me, because I was, and still am, a runner. I left with the confidence knowing the Rock, the Refuge, the Rescuer would see me thorough my situation, and He did! This is who God was to King David at this point in his life, and He gives thanks and worship.

READ v 4. “King David called upon the Lord, as a matter of habit, for He is worthy of praise!” The imperfect Hebrew verb here can mean, and I believe does indicate in the context, that what David did by declaring he would call upon the Lord was to express what was his habitual intention— this would be a way of life for him. Do you and I habitually call upon the Lord? E.g., I meet with some guys in our men’s Bible study regularly and one of the things I like to ask them is, how are your quiet times going? It is important to be a person known for calling

on the Lord, and even pastors struggle here. E.g., I would say most of the pastors with whom I speak don't initiate prayer after I have talked to them about a personal struggle or a situation which is of a concern, but it is greatly refreshing when it happens. Just this past Friday I was on a 40-minute conversation with a minister who is involved with United Methodist renewal, and at the end of the call he asked if he could say a prayer with me, and it was wonderful! We can offer that type of blessing to others, and this is a great gift we can give others, to be a person who calls on the Lord. What are you doing in your quiet times? Basically I am asking, are you habitually calling upon the Lord? This is an essential part of our walk with Him-- that we call upon Him. And that when we do so, we call upon Him with praise. Three ways we can praise God is to thank Him for specific things; love Him-- tell Him we love Him; and name Him— Mohammed Ali thought he was the greatest, but Lord You are!

“When you and I call upon the Lord this week, for what do we have to praise Him about our present situation? What words describe the type of God He is to you and me?” It is easy to overlook the blessings we have this day— for our spouses, for children, our jobs, a roof over our heads, good friends. Let us be sure to fill our quiet times with week with blessings we enjoy from His hand presently in our lives. And be free to share about those blessings with others!