



Songs in the Night Psalm 8

Did You Know You Have a Powerful Way to Gain Strength?

More than ten years ago my life changed in a dramatic way. As I began my first run of the day down an intermediate slope, not having skied in several years because of having torn my Achilles tendon, I pushed hard on my left ski to make my turn and work my way down the hill. Suddenly, the tip of my right ski caught in the snow and my momentum and weight combined to snap my leg in half. In seven places I broke both my tibia and fibula in that moment and came crashing down into the snow. My leg was bent in a ninety degree angle where there is no joint, no hinge. As I lay in the snow, my face looking up into the blue sky above me, I felt great joy at the work of God. The puffy white clouds and the brilliance of the blue above captivated me and as a crowd began to gather around me, I told someone who asked me how I was doing that I was amazed by the splendor of the sky. I may have been a bit delirious with the crushing pain, but I truly was in a spirit of praise over the wonder of God's creation and that joy in Him helped me through my suffering. Even as I was being carried down to the lodge below, I continued to have Psalm 8 on my mind, praising God for the lovely world He made. I realize how strange this sounds but praise somehow eased my pain.

Psalm 8 is not very long, only 9 verses and the first and last verses in the song are identical. **O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!** (Psalm 8: 1, 9 NIV) That is the theme of the entire passage. The Lord's splendor is seen in the heavens and the earth and in how He has made us so wonderfully. Here is the way the first half reads. **O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.** (Psalm 8: 1-5 NIV) This may be, if you make good use of it, one of the most important songs you will ever come across. Let me share with you why!

Verse 2 in this song is the key to unlocking its benefit to you. **From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.** (Psalm 8: 2 NIV) Keep in mind that this entire song is on praise of God! Nothing in it deviates from that point. Let me break down this verse in a couple parts. The term rendered "ordained" from the original Hebrew verb "yasad" means "to establish" or "to set in place", "to lay the foundation". So it is God Himself who establishes this, who designs what we are about to discuss. It is God's plan for how things are. But what is that plan? Here is where it gets interesting. The NIV renders the Hebrew word "oz" here as "praise" but has a footnote that says it could be power. That is most intriguing as the word found in the Hebrew text means power or more probably a stronghold. In other words, it is a safe place. What a wonderful thought; God provides for us a safe place!

Perhaps you best know this verse because Jesus quoted it when He was criticized by the chief priests and Jewish religious leaders at the Temple. He had just driven out the vendors and money changers from the Temple grounds where the non-Jewish worshippers went to pray and that generated quite a bit of anger from Jewish teachers. But then, Jesus began to heal people and the crowd reaction was the final straw. **But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting**

in the temple area, **"Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant.** (Matthew 21: 15 NIV) Jesus' response to their disgust was to quote Psalm 8: 2. **"Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, "From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise'?"** (Matthew 21: 16 NIV) Jesus clearly was using the Greek version of the passage when He referenced it because there the word is just praise.

So which is it? Does the Lord set a foundation of praise or of a safe place? I am certain it is both. God has set a foundation of praise in His children and the praise children give to God is a safe place of strength. Praise is a protection for us from God, a safe place. Let me give a couple of examples. When Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah, a vast army made up of Moabites and Ammonites invaded Judah, heading for the capital city Jerusalem. Jehoshaphat went to the Lord for help, calling all the people of Judah to fast and pray. Nearly all the people of Judah from every town gathered in Jerusalem in front of the Temple to seek the Lord and as Jehoshaphat was praying before the people and God, the prophet Jahaziel was given directions supernaturally by the Lord. God told Jehoshaphat, **"Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the Lord says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's.'"** (2 Chronicles 20: 15 NIV)

God gave them the plan. They were to march out toward the coming Moabite and Ammonite forces and just stand and watch for God to act. Jehoshaphat knew exactly how to greet the coming army. **After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: "Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever."** (2 Chronicles 20: 21 NIV) Praise was the military strategy of God's people. Praise was their safety net, their fortress. Here is what happened next. **As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated. The men of Ammon and Moab rose up against the men from Mount Seir to destroy and annihilate them. After they finished slaughtering the men from Seir, they helped to destroy one another.** (2 Chronicles 20: 22-23 NIV) The people of Judah just stood and watched as God delivered them from their enemy!

We see something similar when Gideon led a small team of Israelites against a massive Midianite army. The strategy was simple. Three hundred men positioned themselves around the Midianite camp late at night. He told them, **"Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do. When I and all who are with me blow our trumpets, then from all around the camp blow yours and shout, 'For the Lord and for Gideon.'"** (Judges 7:17-18 NIV) Several hundred years before, the Israelites began their invasion of the Promised Land with a similar directive from God. Six days they silently marched around the walled city of Jericho. On the seventh day as the Israelite army stood before Jericho, the priests blew their trumpets and then the people as one shouted. Instantly the walls came down, falling outward. The trumpet, or shophar, was how the Israelites were called to worship. **Also at your times of rejoicing — your appointed feasts and New Moon festivals — you are to sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, and they will be a memorial for you before your God. I am the Lord your God.**" (Numbers 10:10 NIV) The secret weapon of Israel was worship of God. It was the means of victory!

This is the point. When the Israelites invaded Palestine, the sounding of the Trumpets was a call to God for deliverance. The same was true for Gideon and his three hundred. When Jehoshaphat met the Moabite army, it was the Lord who really fought their battle. Praise and worship was how they met the enemy. Psalm 8 confirms what we see many times over. It is praise of God that is our stronghold, praise of the Lord that keeps us safe. Your battle may be against depression or addiction or financial ruin or heartbreak or loneliness, but praise of Jesus is your secret weapon. Praise for God galvanizes us psychologically. It instills faith and drives out fear. Faith generates assurance and confidence and knocks back worry. It produces hope in us where there once was despair. It provides supernatural courage, takes your mind off yourself and puts it on God. Say it and you will rise above your problems and your troubles!! **"O Lord, our Lord how majestic is**

your name in all the earth.” It is a new day. You have God to see you through it, God to bring you out of it and into victory and triumph!