

## Psalm 118, Pastor Paul LeBoutillier/Calvary Chapel/Ontario, Oregon

Psalm 118 is the last of the Hallel Psalms, the praise psalms. And you're going to find this interesting, I think. Psalm 118 is the most often quoted psalm in the entire New Testament. If the New Testament authors reach for a psalm, or if they're talking about things that are connected to a psalm, it's going to most likely be this psalm. In fact, this is the only psalm that is quoted by each of the gospel authors, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And most likely this is the psalm... The Bible tells us that on the night that Jesus was arrested, it says that after they celebrated the Passover meal, they sang a hymn, and then they departed to the Mount of Olive. This is probably what they sang. This being the final of the Hallel Psalms, chapter 118, is most likely what they sang before they headed out into the darkness. So, the psalm begins and ends with the exact same words in verse one and then in the final verse, *O, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!* And then it goes on to say, *Let Israel say "His steadfast love endures forever."* Then, *Let the house of Aaron say, "His steadfast love endures forever."* You and I aren't probably part of the house of Israel, nor the house of Aaron, which, of course, is a subset of the house of Israel. But then we're still included in verse 4, *Let those who fear the Lord say, "His steadfast love endures forever."* By the way, those two verses, actually three verses, are a complete repeat of what we just went through last week in Psalm 115. The psalmist says, *Out of my distress, I called on the Lord. The Lord answered me and set me free. The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?* This verse really sums up what happened to the disciples. And it's a realization that, frankly, believers ought to get a hold of. But this is what happened to the disciples when they met Jesus Christ. And they saw him resurrected. This is what happened to them. They realized, just as it says here, the Lord is on my side. I got nothing to be afraid of. What can man do to me? Here they were, after Jesus's death and burial, they were hidden away, locked away in a room for fear of being arrested themselves.

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And then Jesus appeared to them, spoke to them that night, breathed on them, gave them the Holy Spirit to indwell, to regenerate. And they were changed men. They were changed men from that point on, and they knew and understood they were bulletproof. And it doesn't mean they couldn't be hurt. But it's like, big deal. Like Jesus said, "Hey, don't be afraid of somebody who can only kill the body. That's not the big deal. The big deal is the one who, after killing the body, can throw the soul, the spirit, into hell." He says, "That's the one you should fear." Not that God's going to do it to you, but you see, he's simply making a contrasting statement to say, "If somebody does that to you, that's really not that big of a deal because you're still going to go on and live anyway in the presence of the Lord." So, they realized, "What can man do to me? I'm bulletproof. The Lord is on my side," right? So, he repeats that in verse seven, *The Lord is on my side as my helper.* And by the way, that's the role of the Holy Spirit, right?

**[00:04:01.33] - Speaker 1**

He says, *I shall look in triumph on those who hate me. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust, your Bible may say, or put your confidence in man.* What a great statement. It is better to take refuge in God than to trust in man. Man can do some pretty cool things, but it's better to take refuge in God. He goes on to make another statement. *It's better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes.* In other words, powerful people. Sometimes if you need to get something done, you'll go to talk to a powerful person, maybe somebody who can introduce some legislation or somebody who can help change the laws or do something that's going to make life better. And we go and we talk to those people and we begin to put our trust in them. But the Bible says here, it's better to take refuge in the Lord than even to trust in people who have a powerful position in society. Verse 10, *All nations surrounded me. In the name of the Lord, I cut them off. They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side. In the name of the Lord, I cut them off.*

**[00:05:15.58] - Speaker 1**

*They surrounded me like bees. They went out like a fire among thorns. In the name of the Lord, I cut them off. I was pushed hard so that I was falling, but the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.* And that word salvation means deliverance. So, he says, "The Lord has become my deliverance." I've said this many times, but when you see the word salvation in the Old Testament, it's not necessarily talking about eternal salvation because the word means deliverance. Now, you and I can very easily apply it that way. We can say, 'The Lord has become my salvation.' And it applies very much to our eternal salvation. It's a true statement. But in the context, the psalmists and the authors of the Psalms may be actually simply saying, he has become my deliverance or my deliverer, the one who delivers me and so forth. So, he says in verse 15, *Glad songs of salvation are in the tents of the righteous.* Well, at least they should be. He says, "*The right-hand of the Lord does valiantly.*" And the right-hand is always the strength.

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So, the right-hand, the strength of the Lord does valiantly, the right-hand or the strength of the Lord exalts, and he's talking about himself, how the Lord exalts me by his right-hand, his hand of strength. And he says, again, *the right-hand of the Lord does valiantly.* He says in verse 17, and this is a declaration of faith; he says, *I shall not die, but I shall live and recount the deeds of the Lord. The Lord has disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death.* Can you relate to that statement? Have you ever been disciplined by the Lord? Has God disciplined you in your life? Do you know that we're supposed to look at all hardship as discipline? That's what the New Testament says, endure hardship as discipline. In other words, discipline is training. Training.

We're to endure any hardship that happens in our lives as the Lord training us. We're to think of it that way. It's training. And that's how God deals with his people. He disciplines.

**[00:07:40.22] - Speaker 1**

When you're walking with the Lord and you're coming along and there's something, it's going to be difficult, happening in your life, so many people go, "Why is God punishing me? I've prayed, I've repented. I can't think of anything going on in my life that God would punish me for. So why is he punishing me?" And my response is, "What makes you think he's punishing you?" "Well, this thing hurts!" I get that. But so does discipline. Discipline is painful, right, at the time? That's what the scripture tells us. And so, God may not be punishing you. He may just be disciplining. Let me show you what it says about that. I love how this is quoted in the NIV. Out of Proverbs 3, it says, *My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline, and do not resent his rebuke.* If the Lord rebukes you, don't resent it, because the Lord disciplines those he loves as a father, the son he delights in. And this is repeated in the New Testament. The New Testament authors quote this verse to remind Christians who are going through hard times don't give up, particularly in the Book of Hebrews. You know what the Book of Hebrews is all about?

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It's written to Christians who were suffering because of their faith, and they were getting ready to go back to the Law in order to alleviate the persecution they were receiving among other Jews. And so that temptation was so strong that the writer of that letter had to write to them and say, you can't go back. And he began to explain why. And the Book of Hebrews is absolutely amazing. But he actually speaks in that book about the discipline. And I know you're going through hardship. I know you're going through hard times. I know you're struggling. I know it's painful. Consider it. Remember what the word of God says. Don't resent. Don't resent when the Lord allows those things to happen in your life. Don't despise hardship and difficulty, because remember this, God disciplines those whom he loves. Isn't that why you disciplined your kid or discipline your children? Because you love them? Because you if you didn't love them, you just let them go. Just do what you're going to do. I don't care. Just off with you. Right? No, we don't do that as parents. We discipline our children because we love them. We want to save them from heartache.

**[00:10:12.22] - Speaker 1**

We want to teach them what is right and understand what is wrong. So, we discipline them, training. It's not fun. I never enjoyed disciplining my children, but it was something I had to do. And the Lord does it in our life, and he does it because of love. So, he does it because he delights in you. Verse 19, *Open to me the gates of righteousness that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it. I thank you that you have answered me and you have become my salvation.* And then it goes on to say, "The

*stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.*” Now, I want you to stop there. I'm going to show you here in just a little bit how this passage in Psalm 118 is quoted most often during the time of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the very last time when he was hailed by the masses as the Messiah. And he was hailed so publicly and openly, and he received that recognition. Okay? This psalm is speaking of that, specifically when it says in verse 19, *Open to me the gates of righteousness.* And then it goes on to say, *that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord.*

What is the gate of righteousness? It's Jesus. Jesus said in the Book of John, “I am the gate.” And that was one of the I am statements that we actually studied recently here in our men's and women's study, Women of the Word, and then the Bible study that I was doing for the men at the same time. Jesus said, “I am the gate for the sheep. I am the gate through which they enter.” That is the gate of righteousness, right? So, he says, *Open for me the gate of righteousness.* And so, he says, *I thank you that you have answered me and you've become my salvation.* The gate of righteousness has become the means of my salvation. But then this statement is mentioned. *The stone that the builders rejected has become the capstone.* Now, you and I don't build with cornerstones or capstones any anymore because we build with foundations. When you build a building now or a house, they come in and they excavate the land and they set up footings and pour concrete into those footings, and that is the foundation for your home.

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And it's a great way to build. It's a very sturdy, strong way. Well, they didn't do that. In ancient times, they built with rocks. And because they had a lot of rocks in Israel, and they still do, they used rocks as the foundation for their buildings, if not for the whole building itself. But there was a single stone that became the plum line for the rest of the stones, and that was the cornerstone, and everything rested on the cornerstone. Everything was lined up according to the cornerstone. And that's why Jesus is the cornerstone. And when this psalm says that he is the stone the builders rejected. It's talking about the fact that the religious leaders of Israel rejected Jesus because they were devising a building, if you will, with a different set of blueprints. And so, they rejected him as the cornerstone. But the Bible is going to go on to tell us here that he's God's cornerstone. This was God's plan for building the church, the Kingdom of God, if you will. But it's the stone the builders rejected. What were the religious leaders doing? They were building another religious system. It was based on works.

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You had to keep the Law, right? And they realized that that wasn't what Jesus was doing, that Jesus wasn't playing ball with them on their plans. And so, they rejected him. They rejected him, right? So, notice the essence of God's blueprint in verse 23. Look at verse 23 with me. It says,

*"This is the Lord's doing. It is marvelous in our eyes."* God's blueprint is the Lord's doing. It's not man's doing. The Jews were all about man's doing. It's all what you had to do. You got to keep the Law. You got to keep the Sabbath. You got to keep the food laws. You got to keep all of the washings and all of this and all that. And it's all about you and what you do. But God's blueprint for salvation is all about what he does. It's all about the Lord's doing. And so, it says in verse 24, and I want you to keep in mind that we're still talking prophetically about the time when Jesus came into Jerusalem on the back of the foal of a donkey at the triumphal entry. And it says, *"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."*

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Now, stop there. I know we came up with a song that we sang in church for many years. This is the day the Lord has made, and I will rejoice and be glad in it. And Christians quote this all the time. And there's nothing wrong with it, because as Christians, every day that God gives us is the day the Lord has made. But in the context of this psalm, this is talking about the time Jesus came and triumphally rode that foal into Jerusalem. And the Lord is saying, this is the day that we've been talking about. This is the day the Lord has made to declare the Messiah publicly, and we will rejoice and be glad in this day. This is the day that Daniel prophesied about. In fact, Daniel gave the exact day, or at least the construction, mathematically, for figuring out the day when Jesus would ride that foal of a donkey into Jerusalem. This is that day, and we will rejoice and be glad in it. And you know what? We can't help but rejoice and be glad in it. Do you remember what happened on that day when Jesus rode into the city?

**[00:16:48.50] - Speaker 1**

The people were hailing him as the Messiah, and the religious leaders knew and understood what they were doing. They knew that they were declaring Jesus to be the Messiah. They were using Old Testament messianic language and addressing it to Jesus. And they went and they rebuked Jesus and they said, "You need to rebuke your disciples." You remember what Jesus said? And I'm paraphrasing here. He said, "If they hold their tongue, the very rocks and stones will begin to praise or cry out. This is the day the Lord has made, and there will be rejoicing, and there will be gladness." And those people that were there that day just got caught up in all of the gladness and all of the rejoicing. But had they refused, inanimate nature would have risen up and rejoiced in this special day. And then look what it goes on to say, verse 25. It says, *"Save us, we pray, O Lord! O Lord, we pray, give us success!"* Do you remember what the people yelled when they were with palm branches and laying them on ground with their clothes. They were saying, "Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna to the son of David."

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And Hosanna means save now. Save now. And look what the psalm says, verse 25, *Save us*. And it's a cry to the one who is coming on this very special day of the Lord through the gates of the city. *Save us*, they're saying. *Save us*. And then look at here, verse 26, "*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*" And they were actually quoting that. And that's why the religious leaders went to Jesus and said, "You need to tell your disciples to be quiet. They're quoting Psalm 118, and that's for the Messiah." And Jesus accepted that praise. He did not rebuke his disciples. He did not say, "Well, they just get caught up sometimes, and they're just... They don't really know what they're saying." He embraced it. He embraced it completely. *'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We bless you from the house of the Lord. Verse 27, The Lord is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us. Bind the festal sacrifice with cords up to the horns of the altar! You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you. Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!*

Notice the reference in there about taking the sacrifice and bringing it forward, bringing it forth. And that's what they saw coming through the gates of the city that day. Now we're going to end here tonight with me showing you all of the places in the New Testament where Psalm 118 is quoted, and there are several. So, sit back and relax. Here we go. Start Starting with...

Matthew, Chapter 21. Jesus said to them, "*Have you never read the scriptures? The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.*"

Mark, Chapter 12. We're going to run right through these. Have you not read the scripture? *The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.*

Luke, Chapter 20, verse 17. *But he looked directly at them and said, "What then is this that is written? The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone."*

Acts 4:11. *This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you the builders, which has become the cornerstone.*

1 Peter 2: 4-7: "*As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men, but in the sight of God, chosen and precious, you yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture,*

*'Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone, chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.'*

*So, the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, the stone that the builders reject has become the cornerstone.*

*Matthew 21:9. And the crowds that went before him and followed him were shouting, 'Hosanna, save now to the son of David. 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, 'Hosanna in the highest. '*

*Matthew 23, For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. '*

*Mark 11:9, And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, 'Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. '*

*Luke 13:35, 'Behold, your house is forsaken, and I tell you, you will not see me until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*

*' Luke 19, as he was drawing near, already on the way down the Mount of Olive, the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had saying, 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven and glory in the highest. '*

*And then finally, John 12:13. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, 'Hosanna, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.*

So, you can see why Psalm 118 is hugely, enormously important to our New Testament understanding and how often the New Testament authors make use of this psalm to speak of Jesus Christ and his being the cornerstone, the stone the builders rejected, but the one who is the cornerstone to all of God's work among us. And that's where we're going to stop for tonight.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you so much for your word. What a glorious word it is. What a wonderful word it is. We thank you for prophecy. We thank you, Lord God, that you are the Lord who speaks across time, who speaks hundreds and hundreds of years before an event takes place and defines it for us, enlarges upon it for us, and helps us to understand the purpose behind it. Lord, I thank you for these Psalms that we've looked at tonight, particularly Psalm this beautiful messianic prophetic Psalm, speaking of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ, who has become our

salvation. We worship you! We bless you! We praise you! And we lay these things, Lord God, this praise, this worship at your feet. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.