

THE ROCK THAT IS HIGHER THAN I

"From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Psalm 61:2.

David was a broken-hearted man when the experiences here depicted really happened. Through the jealousy of Saul he was forced to leave the palace and find a refuge in the rocks and caves. Eventually Saul died and David reigned as king over Israel, and for many years his reign was happy and prosperous; but his own son, Absalom, a most conceited young man, succeeded in winning the affections of the people.

David, his old father, was obliged to flee and hide himself again. Absalom gave chase and met his death in the pursuit. Thus you find David saying, "My heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I." This gives us a vision of : --

I. The Gentleness of Christ -- "Lead me."

1. "Lead."

It does not read, "Force me to the rock." The Lord never forces a person to take any road leading to the haven of rest. In the East, the shepherd never walks behind the sheep to drive them on; he walks before them and they follow where he leads. And this same principle is recognized throughout the Bible. He leads us in the way everlasting.

We must ask to be led, for we are unable to betake ourselves to the rock. The pathway leading to it can never be found alone. Salvation is not obtainable by our own efforts. Unless the Shepherd leads us we can never reach our destination. He has power to lead by the way that we know not.

2. "Me."

David is blind to all need save his own. Everything with him is personal. He recognizes that God deals with men as individuals. Christianity is a personal religion. "God be merciful to me." "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Don't get the idea that God does not notice you, that you are too insignificant for Him to care for. He knows all about you, your environment, temptations, sins, and difficulties. He knows all that is to be known about you. We must pass through God's turnstile one at a time. In conviction, the dealing is personal -- "Thou art the man." In salvation, faith must be personal -- "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." In sorrow, each must pray for himself, - "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." At death the Shepherd's care is still personal -- "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

II. The Stability of Christ -- "To the Rock."

David had often hidden in a rock to escape from his enemies and then when danger was past climbed out by his own strength; but in the text he prayed to be led to a Rock from which he could never retreat. No doubt this figure of the Rock was suggested by his own past experiences. To David, the Rock meant at least two things: --

1. The Source of Life.

In Exodus 17, you find the Israelites chiding Moses because he had brought them out of Egypt into the wilderness where they had no water. But the Lord told Moses to take the rod that he used when a dry bed was made in the Red Sea for the Israelites to cross over, and to strike the rock. This he did and out of the smitten rock there came forth water, and the thirst of the people was quenched and they lived.

Now that smitten rock stands for Christ. Just as the rock was smitten, so upon the cross of Calvary Christ was smitten. His side was pierced, and there flowed forth blood and water, and now every thirsty soul can find life by coming to Him.

The water that gushed forth from that rock in the wilderness was for all. It brought life to everyone who drank, high or low, rich or poor, learned or ignorant. And Christ, the smitten Rock, is for all. His shed blood cleanses the king in his palace, as well as the beggar in the street.

Solomon spoke about being hid in the cleft of the rock. 2:14. Are you hid in the cleft of the Rock? The Rock, even Christ, has been cleft. Are you hiding in His wounds? Are you sheltered by His blood, as well as refreshed by His life-giving stream?

"ROCK OF AGES"

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.

Could my tears forever flow,
Could my zeal no languor know,
These for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone:
In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyes shall close in death,
When I rise to worlds unknown,
And behold Thee on Thy throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

2. The Shelter In Life.

(1) It sheltered David from his enemies.

When pursued by those who sought his life, he fled to some rock and hid therein until danger was past. In like manner, we have our Rock to Whom we can flee. When we are assailed by temptations, or by Satan, we are perfectly safe if we flee to the everlasting Rock and find shelter in His side.

(2) It sheltered David from the storms of life.

There is no shelter like His presence when we are assailed by the storms of life. He was David's only shelter. Apart from "Jesus only" man is utterly helpless and hopeless.

III. The Preeminence of Christ -- "Higher Than I."

It is His preeminence that makes Him gentle and gives Him stability of character.

1. We need someone higher than ourselves.

Our impotence needs omnipotence; our human weakness, divine strength; our sinful souls, a sinless Saviour. In our sin and weakness we need someone higher than ourselves; someone who has met and conquered the tempter. Some hope to be saved by their self-righteousness, good works, and meritorious efforts. Our text exposes such thoughts as delusions. We cannot reach the Rock by our own effort; but the Lord can take us and put us there.

In our sorrows we need someone who is higher than ourselves. We thank God for the comfort of friends in the dark hour of grief, but how unavailing are the tenderest words to bind up the broken heart. Our bruised hearts need the touch of that great Heart once for all bruised at Calvary. And what ever the storms and tempests of life, Christ affords us a true shelter indeed.

2. Although He is the highest, yet He dwells with the lowest. God has two thrones, one in heaven and the other within the heart of His own.
3. Where His Preeminence is seen.
 - (1) He is higher than the earth.

It is good to know and believe this during these days of darkness and despair. Here there is sorrow, mystery, and death; but He is higher than the earth. Let us look away from the debris of the world to the eternal Rock that is higher than ourselves.
 - (2) His way is higher than ours.

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways," saith the Lord. Although we cannot fathom the meaning of His ways because of our imperfect wisdom, let us trust His wisdom and hide in the Rock that is higher than ourselves.
 - (3) His thoughts are higher than our thoughts.

It is well that they are, because our thoughts are not very high. My thoughts of Christ, the Bible, the Church, the Christian faith, and of life may be high, but His are far higher. He is the pre-eminent and permanent Rock of Ages.

"THE ROCK THAT IS HIGHER THAN I"

O, sometimes the shadows are deep,
And rough seems the path to the goal;
And sorrows, sometimes how they sweep,
Like tempests down over the soul.

O, sometimes how long seems the day,
And sometimes how weary my feet;
But toiling in life's dusty way,
The Rock's blessed shadow, how sweet!

O, near to the Rock let me keep,
If blessings or sorrows prevail;
Or climbing the mountain way steep,
Or walking the shadowy vale.

O, then, to the Rock let me fly,
To the Rock that is higher than I;
O, then, to the Rock let me fly,
To the Rock that is higher than I.