

# Proverbs 18:10

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[0:00] Do be seated.

And turn if you will to Proverbs 18. Like Glenn Scriver, he's a great preacher.

And so it feels a bit like, isn't it, we were going to have strawberries and cream and we've ended up with rhubarb and custard today. But I want us just to look at one verse, alright?

I don't normally preach on one verse. I think you've got to be very gifted to do that. But I want us to do that tonight. And I want you to learn this verse with me, okay? So Proverbs 18, verse 10. You all there?

And so we'll read it together. If you've got a different version, we'll just overrule you. And so we're going to read together Proverbs 18, verse 10. We'll read it after two.

[1:10] One, two. The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous man runs into it and is safe. Let me close in for that.

No. It's a great verse, isn't it? Isn't that a great verse? The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The name of the Lord is a tower of strength.

Do you realize that came from the Bible? Do you know that expression? The name of the Lord is a tower of strength. And the righteous run into it and they are safe.

It's a great picture. Should we read it again after two? One, two. The name of the Lord is a strong tower.

The righteous man runs into it and is safe. So if you remember nothing else about this sermon other than that verse, I don't really care. And I've plucked this verse out of Proverbs 18.

[2:10] The book of Proverbs is written by King Solomon in the main. And his whole purpose in writing the book as the Holy Spirit guided him along was to give his people a manual, a systematic description of how to live a godly life.

And so the Spirit of God enabled him to write down these Proverbs so that the people of God in his kingdom would know how God wanted and what God wanted of them.

They would know how God wanted them to live and they would have the power to live that life. The opening nine chapters of Proverbs, they've got a flow about them and they've got a continuity about them.

And you can see the kind of flow of them. You can expound them from one verse to the next in the opening nine chapters. But after chapter nine, the Proverbs seem to take on an isolated, disconnected statements.

One from the other. They're like little short bursts. Staccato, like bursts of truth that Solomon is belting out. And I believe not all come to this but agree with me on this.

[3:18] But I think they are isolated statements so that when they were memorized, and remember in those days they didn't have Bibles like you've got in front of you to take home. You simply memorized what you heard.

You memorized as it was read. And as you memorize a chapter of scripture, because there's such great variety from chapter nine onwards, you've got a great swathe of Proverbs that actually touch on virtually every part of your life.

And you knew how God wanted you to live. And with the help of his spirit, you would be enabled to walk in it. And so what great wisdom there is in our verse tonight, isn't it? The name of the Lord is a strong tower.

And the righteous man runs into it and is safe. And so you think of those castles, you know? You see them, there's many on the coast, aren't there? They're great round towers.

Rising. They are circular. They are straight. They are tall. And they've often got a door, haven't they, 14 foot up. They're 120 foot high or so.

[4:26] And then they've got a door that you can't get into. And you think, well, why is that door there? And so when the Vikings came or whoever it was invaded, you get your ladder, you climb up the ladder, you open the door that's 14 foot up.

You go through the door, you pull the ladder up and you are safe. That's the picture. You're able to put the right hand. You're able to put the right hand. You're able to pour oil, burning hot tar, whatever it is, on your opponent's hand.

The name of the Lord is a strong tower. And the righteous man runs into it and is safe. It's a great picture. Tuesday is St. Paddy's day, isn't it?

St. Patrick's day. And St. Patrick returned to Ireland in year 432. Easy year to remember. He'd been a slave, slave captured to Ireland.

And St. Patrick had escaped 15 years earlier. But he couldn't escape the voice of his conscience. The voice that said to him, we pray you, holy youth, come again and walk among us.

[5:32] And that voice nagged away at St. Patrick. We pray you, holy youth, come again, walk among us. 15 years later, in year 432, Patrick landed again in Ireland.

And he made straight for a place called Tara in County Meath. Because there was the seat of the high king. Ireland was a series of small kingdoms. But there was a high king at Tara. And the high king had ordered that anyone moving on that night, it was a sort of curfew, anyone moving on that night should be killed.

He sent messengers out to make sure that nobody was out and about. He'd heard that there was this party that had landed and was making for Tara. And all that is true.

And the bit that is legend is that the messengers came after being out patrolling the streets. They came back to the king and they said, we couldn't find anybody. We did see a herd of cattle moving over the hills.

The Lord has his own way of doing things, you know. The legend is that as the cattle walked along, they sang that marvelous hymn that is St. Patrick's Press Plate. I bind unto myself the strong name of the Trinity.

[6:45] The name of the Lord is a tower of strength. The righteous run into it and is safe. Three really brief points.

The first is this, every believer walks in the way of threat and danger. Every believer, and that includes you if you are a believer, walks in the way of threat and danger.

And I say I'm every believer because there's a truth hidden in the word, isn't there? I'm righteous. Righteous means to be right with God. And in the Old Testament, as well as the New, all the way through the Bible, and this is really, really important you get hold of, the way to be right with God is to trust his promises.

So here's an Old Testament man. He's just been to the temple to offer a sacrifice for his sins. And when he returns, his wife questions him.

And she says to him, how do you know that your sins are forgiven? He says, well, I was there. I was there, he said, and I saw the animal die in my place. She says, how do you know that it died in your place?

[7:59] This one says, well, because I laid my hand on its head. And I appointed it to be a substitute for me. His wife says, but how do you know that this is the right way to be right with God?

Because he said so. Because he said so. You see, God appoints a sacrifice and they trusted what he said.

If you offer this sacrifice, if you nominate it to be your substitute, your sins will be carried away, God said. Now instead of the animal, put in Jesus.

I lay my sins on Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, who bears them all and frees us from the accursed load.

My faith would lay her hand on that dear head of thine, while as a penitent I stand and there confess my sin. We nominate Jesus as our substitute and we put our trust in what God has promised.

[9:12] And those who trust in Jesus, God says, are right with me. The name of the Lord is a strong tower and the righteous man runs into it and is safe.

The person who is right with God, who has put his trust in God, runs into it and is safe. And he needs a place to run to.

Because every believer walks in the way of threat and danger. The world, flesh, the devil, the world with all its allurements and all its temptations.

The flesh with all its allurements and all its temptations. The devil with all his allurements and temptations. And every believer walks in the way of threat and danger.

There are times when that's greater or lesser. And we are aware that in the next few weeks and in the next few months, the danger will be greater.

[10:25] And the threat will be greater. And every believer walks in the way of threat and danger. And yet every believer walks in the way of revelation.

So what's strange about verse 10? Let's read it again. After 2, 1, 2. The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous man runs into it and is safe.

What's strange about verse 10? Let's look down. There seems to be some words that are unnecessary. Don't they? Can you spot where they are?

If you got rid of the first three words of the verse, would it still make sense? It would, wouldn't it?

Because the Lord is a strong tower. That is what the verse says.

It doesn't say the Lord is a strong tower, although that is true of course. It says the name of the Lord is a strong tower. Why? Ask yourself why? Wouldn't it be just the same if the Lord is a tower of strength?

[11:31] And the righteous run to him and is safe? Well yes, but it says the name of the Lord. So let's think. What about the name of the Lord? Why does the Bible talk about the name of the Lord all the time?

Well because the name of the Lord summarizes that all that God has told us about himself. All that we know of God by way of revelation.

And that name is shorthand for all that God has told us about himself. And so when we talk about the name of the Lord, we always have to go back to Exodus. It started way back with Moses, isn't it?

And Moses was being sent back to Egypt to bring the people out. And he was terrified. And Moses makes every excuse possible. And his first excuse is, well when I go to the sons of Israel, they're going to say to me, well what is this God's name?

Who appeared to you? This God who's appeared to you in the burning bush, who is he? What's his name? What will I say to them? And the Lord said to them, tell them that I am, that I am has appeared to you.

[12:45] I am that I am has appeared to you. And that doesn't give away that much, does it? I am that I am. I think we struggle to understand that.

I do DIY, I'm not very good at DIY. I pull up shelves and the shelves are wonky and the screws are loose. Claire comes up and she says, look, that's not very good, is it?

And I say, well, I am that I am. That's who I am. What does it mean? I listened to a sermon recently, somebody sent me a sermon to give feedback on, it's on Exodus 3.

And the person said this, they said, you will meet many threats and many needs. And on every occasion, whatever you need, the Lord will come to you and say that I am that I am.

Well, that isn't really what Exodus 3, kind of exegetically, is talking about. But theologically, that is actually quite right. I am what you need.

[13:58] He really meant the things that you needed at the time. So think of the people of Israel, they are in the grip, aren't they, of a rotten, genocidal king. A megalomaniac.

And if they get out of the grip of the king, they've got to face the Red Sea. How are they going to face that? And if they get over the Red Sea, how are they going to face the wilderness?

There's no shops, there's no crops, there's no nothing. How will they live? I am what I am. You want to be released from the deadly king? God says, I am that.

You want to cross the Red Sea? I am that. You want to survive the wilderness? I am that. Because the name of the Lord is a strong tower. When you come across in the Bible the name of the Lord, it's not saying that there's some magic to it.

It's not something that you can enchant. It's not a title. Names are important in the Bible, isn't it? There are names that they don't have significant meaning for us.

[15:06] But in the Bible, you didn't just pick a random name or a name you liked or a name from a character in a book. You picked a name because you wanted it to epitomize the child that was born.

There's still a sense of that today. Certain names matter, don't they? Your family name matters. But when you think of the name of the Lord, you are to think of the totality of God.

When we are to think of the name of the Lord, we are to ponder everything that we know about God. Everything we know of who He is. He is one God and there is no other. And this one God is one God in three persons.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The same in substance. Equal in power and glory. The name of the Lord is everything we know of this God who is a spirit and who is infinite and eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Everything you know about the God of the Bible is in this little phrase, the name of the Lord. And so the title Lord, L-O-R-D in capital letters, is given 7,000 times in the Old Testament.

[16:17] He is a person to be known and a person to be known by. And the name of God has revealed of Himself and refers to Himself that He is the only living God.

He is the source of all living things. He has no beginning and no end. He is and was and always will be. That is our God. He is uniquely different.

And it was this name, wasn't it, that Jesus Christ spoke of and He said, Before Abraham was, I am. And so tonight, do you feel at the end of your tether?

The end of your rope? You don't know how you're going to get through this week. Well, in Genesis 22, verse 14, God is described as the Lord, our provider. Do you feel unwell?

I hope not. Do you feel, for those who are listening, do you feel unwell? Exodus 15 describes God as the Lord who heals and maybe not in this world, but certainly in the world to come.

[17:37] Do you feel life is a battle and a struggle and you're always having a fight? Exodus 17, verse 5, the Bible tells us that He is the Lord, our banner.

He's struggling with sin. Really fighting with sin and maybe the same sin over and over again. Well, Leviticus 20, verse 8, tells us that He is the Lord who sanctifies, who makes you clean, who sets you apart.

You overcome with guilt. You can't forgive yourself. You can't understand that you could ever be forgiven. Well, Jeremiah 33, verse 16 says, He is the Lord, our righteousness.

And maybe you don't know what the future is and you don't know what's going to happen over the next few weeks. And you don't know where to run. And you don't know what it looks like in a couple of years' time. Well, Psalm 23, verse 1 says, He is the Lord, your shepherd.

Are you lonely? You're lonely and you feel that no one cares or no one understands.

[18:47] Well, Ezekiel 48, verse 35, the Lord is there. You've got no strength. You've got no strength and you don't feel you can go on and you're weary and you're tired.

Well, you go to Isaiah 1, verse 24, and you find that there He is the Lord of hosts. He is a tower and anything you need, it is found in this living God who has made Himself known through Jesus Christ. And the name of the Lord is a strong tower and you come to me looking for help. Don't you, some of you, you come to me for help. And there are times when your minister and your elders, there are times when they can help.

But there are times when they get tired and they get weary. And if they're faithful shepherds and they're faithful elders and ministers, they will say more often than not, I wish I could help, but I don't know.

But what's our verse? Should we read it? After 2, 1, 2. The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous man runs into it and is saved.

[19:58] Every believer walks in the way of threatening danger and every believer walks in the way of revelation. And then every believer walks in the way of faith.

So what do the righteous do? What do the righteous do? They run. They run into the tower. And they're safe. And they don't leave it to chance. And they don't delay. They get on with it. You run to your strong tower.

I have an old Bible that my dad gave to me. It was the Bible that he used when he became a Christian. And it's old school. It's kind of one of these big whopping things. It's a King James Version Bible.

And it's a Bible that has a little summary in tiny, tiny print. In case you might try to read it. In front of every chapter.

[21:02] And in Acts 9, Peter is arrested by King Herod. And he's imprisoned. And he is under sentence of death. And in relation to Acts 5, Acts chapter 12 and verse 5.

The old Bible says, The church fleeth to prayer. The church fleeth to prayer. Isn't that vivid? The church fleeth to prayer.

We're not going to delay. We're going to get there as quick as we can. And the name of the Lord is a tower of strength. And the one who is right with God runs into it.

And is safe. We come to him tonight remembering all he is. We come in the storm and with the worries.

And we remind ourselves that we have no other refuge. We have no other rock. We have no other place to hide. And so we run. We've tried the house of straw.

[22:10] But the wolf huffed and puffed and blew it down. And we've tried the house of wood. And the wolf has huffed and puffed and blow it down. And the only place that is safe.

Is the tower of the Lord. The word safe here. It means literally to be set up. To be lifted high.

You know it's like isn't it. When our family or other young families come to your house to visit. What do you do with the valuables? What do you do with the ornaments? What do you do with the pictures? You lift them up don't you?

You put them on high because you want them to remain safe. And that's the word here. That's the picture here. That's the threat.

You're not completely removed out of it. But you're kept safe in it. And so the question is this. How is it possible. For the holy God of heaven.

[23:15] To be a strong tower. To people like me and you. Who are full of sin. How can the God whose eyes are too pure.

To even look upon evil. How is it that he can welcome you into his tower. And keep you safe. And lift you up. God is holy and we are sinful. It's like two ends of a magnet isn't it.

You get a magnet. And they repel each other. You can't bring them close together. No matter how you try. How is it that we can find God to be our strong tower.

We have all this sin. And you know the answer don't you. There is only one way for our sin to be dealt with. And it is through Jesus Christ. Who in verse 10 is the truly righteous man.

Who lived a perfect life. Who kept the law at every point. And went to the cross in that storm. The storm of the fury of God's wrath against sin.

[24:15] And he bore it and he took it. So that sinners like you and like me. That as we turn from our sin. It can be forgiven.

And it can be taken away as far as the east is from the west. And we can be reconciled to God. And we can run to him in faith and repentance.

Have you done that? Have you run to Jesus Christ and made him your saviour and your lord and your rock and your refuge? And that is how the Christian life begins isn't it?

And that is how the Christian life continues. So verse 10 let's say it together. The name of the lord is a strong tower.

The righteous man runs into it and is saved. It's a very vivid proverb. It's very easy to remember. And whisper it to yourself on your way to work tomorrow on your way to school.

[25:18] The name of the lord is a tower of strength. The one who is right with God runs. And is safe. Let's pray. Heavenly father we ask.

Let's pray.