

# God's Way is Perfect

by Mason Vann

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I like that song we sang, "Abide With Me," because, I like that line "help of the helpless." And I'm always encouraged when I'm reminded that God knows what He has to deal with. Helpless. But He's a helper. And when you're left to yourself, you can't even stand before a servant girl, but when God's with you, you can stand before thousands. Nothing is impossible.

Turn with me, if you will, to Psalm 18. What's amazing about this psalm is that we could read this text here, what I'm about to read from here, or we could read it from 2 Samuel 22, because this psalm in its entirety is also quoted over there in 2 Samuel 22, which is pretty significant when you consider how important the real estate of the Bible is; that there are things in this psalm that are so important they bear repeating twice. And this is certainly one of them.

We'll just read verse 30.

*"As for God, His way is perfect. The Word of the Lord is tried. He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him."*

Let's pray. Lord, I was thinking there earlier of those verses in Amos, where it talks about there would be a famine of the Word of the Lord, and how they'd go to and fro and stagger, and they'd look for it and never find it. And how that's about the worst thing that could ever happen to a people, is that God would stop talking to them. And so, God, we're conscious of that tonight. Lord, it didn't say there would be a famine of preaching, but it said there'd be a famine of the Word of the Lord. And so we don't take it for granted tonight, Lord. But we come once again on a covenant that has been enacted on better promises by a new and living way inaugurated by the Lord Jesus Christ, and we ask You, would You speak to Your people? Thank You, O God, tonight we have a Good Shepherd Who goes out ahead of us, and calls us by name and leads us into pasture, and so Lord, would You please open Your Word tonight? Would You please save Your people? God, we just want the saints to be encouraged. Amen.

This verse has meant a lot to me. Some of you may know, a while back, my youngest son had some pretty serious health conditions, and we had to uproot and move to St. Louis and we lived in the CICU there for a couple months, and right about the time that was happening, our house was also falling apart in the truest sense of the word, to the point that they actually had to come in and cut out all the walls downstairs and jackhammer out the concrete down to the dirt. And we were pretty discouraged. And we were really struggling with the whole thing. And I

remember walking down there one day and seeing the only wall that they could not cut out, for structural reasons, it was where all the electricity came in and it was load bearing, and it was literally the only wall of the interior walls they couldn't cut out. And it was also the only wall down there that had anything on it. And the thing that it had on it was this verse. And I remember looking through this bombed out area with insulation hanging down out of the roof and wires hanging everywhere, and reading the words, "As for God, His way is perfect."

But the reality of this verse is this is not just for times when the house falls apart and one of your kids is dying. This verse is also for everyday life. This verse is for the monotonous days of motherhood, like when you've done laundry, you've done five loads of laundry that day and in a miracle on the same level as the loaves and the fish, there's somehow more laundry than when you first started. And you want to read the book that everybody's talking about on Facebook that's so good, but you can't, because the kids are crying again. Or, you've been trying really hard to work on your finances and honor the Lord in it, and you've been making some progress, but then the car dies. Right? Or you're going along, you're sitting at your desk on just a mundane everyday Wednesday and you're thinking in your mind, I thought I was going to be a missionary. These verses are for the cataclysmic times, but they're also for the times in your life when it just feels like your life is one big distraction from the things that really matter. And it feels like something has gotten off track. And if you could just get to the point to where you could get some of these distractions that are bombarding you out of your way, then you could really live the Christian life.

Through all that confusion, this verse comes to you and says, no, no, no. God's way is perfect. It is perfect. Verses like this clear the fog so that we can see the things that happen to us on a daily basis are not haphazard or the result of a distant God. Your life is handcrafted by a loving Father Whose way is perfect. It's perfect.

And this truth will anchor you. It will anchor you when you enter into difficulties; when something happens you feel like shouldn't have happened, or something hasn't happened, you feel like should have happened. Like you're in a difficult job, and day in and day out, you're laboring in this job and you're looking and you're trying to move, and for some reason, things just don't come open. Or your singleness has lasted a lot longer than you thought it would. And the slanderer comes to you just like he did in the Garden, and he starts to whisper in your ear, and he starts to put these subtle thoughts in your mind, that maybe God's way is not perfect. Maybe there are some things that you should have, that you don't have. Or maybe there's things in your life that you shouldn't have that you do have. And somewhere along the way, it got off track. It got off track and His way's

not perfect. And you feel this subtle disillusionment and you feel an unsettledness start to creep into your life. And during those times, you need this truth: God's way is perfect. It's always perfect.

### **Surrendering to God's Way**

And that brings me to my first point. Number one: A great part of walking with God is surrender to His way in your life. Surrender to His way in your life. Let me ask you a question: At the deepest part of you, is there a glad surrender to the way that God has and is leading your life? There can be trials. There can be difficulty. There can be pain. And there can be tears, but I'm asking you the question, at the deepest part of you, are you yielded to what God has and is doing in your life? Because there are going to be times when God allows trials to come that will knock you down. It's going to happen. And they may be cataclysmic or it may just be the slow grind of a daily trial, which is sometimes the hardest type of trial, because those types of trials are difficult because there's just no end in sight. You just don't know when it's going to be over. And day after day after day, this thing goes on. And you start to feel an unsettledness. And the temptation during those times is to allow that discontentment to creep in, and you begin to question the way that God orders your life and the world around you.

And this is actually what happened with Job. Job was a righteous man, and he would not outright deny God. But there was also this subtle unsettledness that came in. This kind of unyieldedness. This wanting an account for the way God was running the world. And you see this, I'll just read this verse. Job 13:3 He says this, "But I would speak to the Almighty and desire to argue my case with God." The implication here is if I could just talk to God, there's some things that I could inform Him about and He would learn something. If I could just explain how things are going right now and how I've acted and the things that have happened to me, we could clear the air and God could order things aright. That's the implication here. Trials can have a way of causing us to overestimate our ability to understand our circumstances. And that's what happened to Job. And so God answers him. He almost comes against him.

In Job 38, he says this, *"Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, 'who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Dress for action like a man. I will question you and you make it known to me.'"*

Let me ask you a question. How does God's response to Job strike you? I mean, have you ever had the thought, especially if you've read the first several chapters, God's a little harsh here? The guy has lost everything. Do you think God is being unnecessarily harsh here?

Let me tell you a story. When my oldest son was much younger and learning to swim, it was not going well, and then one day, it started going a little bit better. And he could swim a little bit. But the ability to swim a little bit gave him so much confidence, he was utterly convinced, it is time for the deep end. Like, that's where we're going right now. We're going to the deep end. And I was seriously having a problem because almost every time I turned my back, I would see him start creeping over there towards the edge to jump off into the deep end, to the point that I was really getting concerned about it, because I knew if he jumps in the deep end, he's going to drown. And I could tell that there was this subtle thought that I was withholding something good from him. So what did I do? I took him. I waded him out over his head, and I dropped him. And I let him struggle just long enough to see that he was in a context where leaning on his own understanding would cost him his life. That's what's at stake here. That's what at stake here with Job. And that's what's at stake when you feel like something's not going on in my life that should be going on. A subtle thought that God has missed the boat. There's something that God has ordered in my life that should be different. You are in a context where you are on your own understanding, and it will cost you your life.

And so what does the loving Father do to Job? He continues to question him. *"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know. Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid the cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"*

And what is the answer? Not me. Not me. I wasn't there when in wisdom God created the world. I wasn't there when the cornerstone was laid and all these things are happening. I am insufficient. Not me, God. Not me.

Listen to just a few more portions of this. *"Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb? When I made clouds its garments and thick darkness its swaddling band and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors and said, 'thus far you shall come, and no further, and here shall your proud waves be stayed.' Have you commanded the morning since your days began and caused the dawn to know its place? Have you entered into the springs of the sea or walked the recesses of the deep? Have the gates of death been revealed to you or have you seen the gates of deep darkness? Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare if you know all of this."*

And what's the answer? Not me. Not me. I can not talk to the ocean. I have never commanded the morning. I have never walked the recesses of the sea. I have not seen the gates of death. And I, in my own understanding, am insufficient to interpret my own circumstances. Not me. The only thing you have, beloved, is a Shepherd. His name is Jesus. And He can talk to waves. And He was there when the

foundation of the world was laid. And He has walked the recesses of the deep. And He has seen the gates of death. And He is sufficient to order your days. You have a Shepherd. You don't have your own understanding, but you do have a Shepherd and if you will yield to Him, He will lead you. He will lead you. You must base your life on this solid truth by interpreting everything that happens to you through who He is and who He has revealed Himself to be.

### **A Life Built on God's Word**

And that brings me to my second point, which flows from our text. Number one: A great part of the Christian life is surrender to the way of God. Number two: A life surrendered to God's way is a life built on His Word. That's the implication of our text. It says this, "The Word of the Lord is tried." What is God doing? What is God doing in your circumstances? Why does He bring these trials? Why does He let these things happen that we don't understand? He is moving you off of your own feelings. Off of interpreting the world through your narrow viewpoint, on to something solid like His Word.

We hear this same thought come up, I'll just read this from Proverbs 30. Listen to this: *"Surely, I am more stupid than any man and do not have the understanding of a man."* I thought man, this is the ESV, I should probably go check the NASB. Because that just does not sound right. I read the NASB. Same thing. This is what the Bible says. Probably not going to find that in "Chicken Soup for the Soul." *"Surely, I am more stupid than any man and I do not have the understanding of a man. Neither have I learned wisdom, nor do I have knowledge of the Holy One."*

Now listen to this language: *"Who has ascended to heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fist? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? And who has established the ends of the earth? What is His name or His Son's name? Surely you know."* Now listen for our text. *"Every word of God is tested. He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him."*

What is God doing? God is moving you off of the burden of your own understanding on to His Word. And I love this, the language that it uses here. It just doesn't say, "the Word of the Lord," it says, "the Word of the Lord is tried." It's tried. Nobody wants to walk across that weak looking bridge, but neither do we like walking across brand new bridges. If we had it our way, we like to walk across a solid bridge with a few footprints on it. Why is that? We'd like to see it work. I'd like to know this works.

I actually ran into this with my little girl after we worked on some swimming lessons with the son. I was trying to get her to jump off the side of the pool to me, and we'd do "one, two, three," "four, five, six..." I mean, we got really high. She still hadn't jumped. And then finally, she looked at me and said, "can he

do it first?" What's she asking? She's like I'd like to see this work before I do this. I want to see that this is tried. And can we just take a moment to thank God, beloved, He has given you a tried Word. In His authority and in His sovereignty and in His holiness, He owes no man an explanation. God needs no authority outside of His Word. He doesn't need to show you that this works for you to submit to it. But in His mercy, and in His condescension, He has given you a tried Word.

When was the Word of the Lord tried? Well, it was tried in the life of Abraham. God told him, you're going to be the father of a multitude, but what happens? He starts getting old. And the years roll on and he's getting older, and Sarah's getting older, and it looks like the Word of the Lord is going to fail, but what happens? They have a baby boy just like God said. The Word of the Lord was tried. And so that later on in his life, when God says take your only son, your beloved son, and go sacrifice him, what does Abraham do? He wakes up early and he quietly walks up that mountain. How does he do that? How can he cut through his circumstances? How can he get through what you would be just riveted to your own understanding and churning and really struggling and saying how is he waking up early and diligent to do this? Why? Because he's got a tried Word.

I've seen God do this before. His promise holds. When was the Word of the Lord tried? It was tried in the life of Joseph. God told him, your family is going to bow down to you. And then what happens? His family gathers and says, "praise the Lord, we're going to bow." That isn't what happened. All chaos breaks loose and it seems like the more that he tries to pursue righteousness, the further he gets from the Word of the Lord. So that by the end of the thing, there he sits in a dungeon and completely forgotten. And it looks like the way of the Lord is not perfect and His Word is untried. But what happens? God orchestrates a situation that nobody else in the whole kingdom can solve but him. And before he knows it, his family is gathered around him bowing. The Word of the Lord is tried.

When was the Word of the Lord tried? It was tried in the life of Joshua so that at the very end of his life, he could say this, *"And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that not one word has failed of all of the good things that the Lord your God promised concerning you. All has come to pass for you. Not one of them has failed."* You've got this old man standing there at the end of his life, and what is he saying? He's saying God's way is perfect and His Word is tried. His Word is tried.

So the question is tonight, are you leaning on your own understanding? And that's how you're interpreting your circumstances? The things that are happening to you that you feel like maybe should not, or the things that haven't happened, that you feel like should. Or are you basing your life on His Word? This is who God is. So let my circumstances and my thoughts and my feelings militate against this

all they want, I reach through the whole thing, I cut through the fog and I hold to His promise. This is who God has revealed Himself to me. Even though everything looks like it's failed. God is true. And every man's a liar. His Word is tried.

### **A Life with a Refuge**

Finally, number three: A life built on His Word is a life with a refuge. It says this, "*He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.*" He's a shield. The hardest part of the trial is usually not the trial itself, but it's what's going on in your heart during the trial. It's that time frame when you're still trying to figure out, am I going to yield to God in this thing? Something's come along that I can't understand, and it seems like something has gone wrong here. And you're wrestling in your heart. Those moments when you're not yet settled and you're not yet yielded, and during those times, you don't have a shield. And you just get pounded. The unbelief creeps in. The discontentment creeps in. Bitterness starts to creep in. And you can just feel your soul churning.

But what is the call of God to you tonight? It is to come under My shield. Don't live any longer in the burden of your own understanding and trying to figure out what is best for your life and whether things have turned out the way that they should. Trust God. His way is perfect. I used to run a makeshift homeless ministry there in Birmingham, and I would reach out to the homeless and do various things, and then try and take them to a shelter. And I was always astounded by how many of them would get in a shelter, and before I could get back to my car, they were already out of the shelter. And the basic reason was that they did not want to submit to the rules of those that were trying to care for them. Their desire to be independent was greater than their desire to submit to people that loved them. And that can happen in the Christian life. And so what is the call? The call is come find refuge in the Lord. Come find refuge in the Lord. And trust Him.

Let's pray. God, we thank You so much tonight that we have You for a refuge, and that Your Word is tried and Your way is perfect. And so Lord, would You help us tonight in faith to bow the knee? We bless You, Lord. Amen.