

The Psalms: Infallible Inspiration For Living
Psalm 80
Inspiration In Confusion

Psalm 80

Restore Us, O God

To The Choirmaster: According To Lilies. A Testimony. Of Asaph, A Psalm.

1 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth. 2 Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up your might and come to save us! 3 Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved! 4 O LORD God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers? 5 You have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in full measure. 6 You make us an object of contention for our neighbors, and our enemies laugh among themselves. 7 Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved! 8 You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. 9 You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land. 10 The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches. 11 It sent out its branches to the sea and its shoots to the River. 12 Why then have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit? 13 The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it. 14 Turn again, O God of hosts! Look down from heaven, and see; have regard for this vine, 15 the stock that your right hand planted, and for the son whom you made strong for yourself. 16 They have burned it with fire; they have cut it down; may they perish at the rebuke of your face! 17 But let your hand be on the man of your right hand, the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself! 18 Then we shall not turn back from you; give us life, and we will call upon your name! 19 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts! Let your face shine, that we may be saved!

Introduction: When you read Psalm 80, it jumps off the page that “Certain questions are asked of God in this psalm, but they are not answered. The people have been faithful in worship, asking for God’s help, but God has not responded.”¹

So, is God still with us when He doesn’t answer our cries for an explanation? Is God still with us when everything in our life turns into a disaster? The fact is that the world and even our own hearts will say He isn’t. At various points in every person’s relationship with God, you will FEEL like God has left you, and you might even find yourself believing it!

The question then is: what do we do when that happens? What should we do when everyone and everything around us is trying to convince us that God isn’t in control, or that He doesn’t care about us anymore? What do we do when we can’t reconcile what the Bible tells us to be true about God with the circumstances surrounding us? Well, Psalm 80 shows us—run to God and tell Him exactly how you feel!

¹ Limburg, J. (2000). [*Psalms*](#) (P. D. Miller & D. L. Bartlett, Eds.; p. 274). Westminster John Knox Press.

Let's walk through this Psalm and dig into what's being said.

Proposition: There are four parts to Psalm 80 that, if properly understood, will inspire us in times of spiritual confusion.

The first part reveals the Psalm's purpose.

(1) The PURPOSE of the Psalm: Asaph is crying out to God for Him to restore Israel to His favor. (80:1-3)

A. Restore Us, O God. To The Choirmaster: According To Lilies. A Testimony. Of Asaph, A Psalm.

1. First, a psalm is indeed a poem, but the ones in the Bible are not given to us to interpret and apply however we want. They are given to us under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and thus written as infallible, inerrant, divinely authoritative words meant for us to understand and apply as they were intended to be understood and applied by the Holy Spirit who inspired them! That means to properly understand and apply the psalms, we must interpret them through the Scripture itself, just like we do every other Scripture. The Bible is the authority on how it should be understood and applied, which means the New Testament is the authoritative Word on how to rightly understand and apply the Old.
2. Second, when you read the Psalms, you will notice that most of them (not all) have a title, as well as other information, printed before the words of the actual psalm. When that happens, it's important to pay attention to that information. The translators of your Bible didn't add that information; it appears in the ancient manuscripts and does so for a reason!
3. In Psalm 80, the title tells us the focus or purpose of the Psalm, which in this case is a cry to, **"Restore Us, O God"**
4. Furthermore, in Old Testament days, the psalms were sung by choirs, and with this one, we see the instructions given to the choir director on how it was to be sung—**"To The Choirmaster: According To Lilies."** **"Lilies"** was apparently a melody known by the Levites, who were responsible for ministering to the people with music. However, until Thomas Edison invented the phonograph in 1877, humankind had no way to record sounds; as such, over time, the melody the Levite singers were to sing this psalm to was lost.
5. We then see that this is **"A testimony,"** meaning it's coming from a real person, going through a real experience—**Asaph!** So who is Asaph? I asked my Logos Bible Software that question, and here's what it spit out:

Note: “Asaph is the author of Psalm 80, though the specific historical occasion that prompted the psalm remains unknown.² Rather than being a character within the psalm itself, Asaph is the psalmist—the one speaking throughout the composition. Asaph lived during David’s time and served as a worship leader in Jerusalem.³ ... Asaph’s role in the psalm is fundamentally that of a faithful advocate—someone who remembers God’s past care for Israel and pleads for divine restoration in a moment of crisis. Asaph lived an exceptionally long life, serving through David’s entire reign and continuing into Solomon’s reign—he was still active when Solomon dedicated the temple, approximately fourteen years into Solomon’s rule. This extended lifespan allowed him to maintain his position as a leading musician across two royal administrations. However, Asaph’s direct service appears to have ended sometime during Solomon’s temple dedication, marking the conclusion of his personal ministry. Yet his influence extended far beyond his lifetime.⁴ The Asaph family continued leading temple music for centuries afterward, with inspired poets emerging from the Asaph guild across generations.⁵ His descendants maintained prominent roles through the reigns of Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah, and after the exile, members of the guild returned and participated in the dedication of the second temple.⁶ The psalms attributed to Asaph reflect this extended legacy. While some psalms likely originated with Asaph himself during David’s time, the collection bearing his name may have begun with him but was prolonged over the years by the Asaph singers, with some psalms like Psalm 74 best understood in an exilic context. This means the “Psalms of Asaph” represent not just one man’s compositions but a tradition of sacred poetry maintained by his descendants across centuries of Israel’s history.”⁷

B. So the title has already told us the psalm’s purpose, and the first three verses take us right into it.

1. 1 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth. 2 Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up your might and come to save us!

² James E. Smith, *The Wisdom Literature and Psalms*, Old Testament Survey Series (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co., 1996), 346.

³ H. L. Willmington, *Willmington’s Bible Handbook* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1997), 317–318.

⁴ George O. Wood, *George Wood’s Sermons: Old Testament*, George Wood’s Sermons (WORDsearch, 2013).

⁵ John Richard Sampey, “Psalms, Book Of,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, ed. James Orr et al. (Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915), 2490.

⁶ Kevin W. Larsen, “Asaph, Son of Berechiah,” in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

⁷ J. D. Douglas and Merrill Chapin Tenney, in *New International Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 96–97.

- a. **“Give ear”** is to ask God to listen to Him at a time when many felt like God wasn’t!
- b. **“O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!”**
 - 1) This is HUGE! The rest of this psalm is filled with statements that show the doubt and confusion Asaph and the people were feeling, and that some were even starting to incorrectly believe about this truth: God was the Shepherd of Israel, and He was always going to shepherd them. This truth didn’t depend on how they felt or understood their circumstances, and Asaph appears to cling to it even though he’s clearly at least empathetic toward those who have lost faith. Nonetheless, no matter how he felt or interpreted his circumstances, Asaph was still running to God! His faith was there in spite of His feelings!
 - 2) Some scholars point to Asaph mentioning Joseph as potentially meaning this psalm was written during a time of separation between the northern and southern tribes. But given he mentions Benjamin in the next verse, I don’t think the purpose was geographical but rather to metaphorically point us to the people who were once dependent on God to provide for them through the son of Jacob (Israel) that the other sons sold into slavery—Joseph! When Jacob, his sons, and their families fled to Egypt, they were known and favored through their kinship to Joseph, whom God had raised up out of slavery to run Pharaoh’s entire kingdom. Ironically, in those days God shepherded Israel through Joseph!
- c. **“You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.”**
 - 1) Once again, it doesn’t matter that it may feel like God’s not in charge. Asaph makes it clear he is coming to God because God is in charge!
 - 2) “The Lord is pictured sitting **enthroned** in the temple above the gold-covered **cherubim** (cf. 99:1; 1 Kings 6:23–28) over the ark of the covenant.”⁸
 - 3) “Cherubim were winged creatures that decorated thrones in Israel’s world. Psalm 99:1 says, “The LORD is king. ... He sits enthroned upon the cherubim,” and this way of speaking was found in Israel from

⁸ Ross, A. P. (1985). [Psalms](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 852). Victor Books.

premonarchical times (1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2). Alongside the picture of God as shepherd is a picture of God as king.”⁹

- 4) “*Shine forth* or ‘blaze forth’ ... No great outreaching of power is called for, only that the darkness of his disfavor be dispelled by his light.”¹⁰

2. 3 Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved!

- a. First, only God can restore a broken relationship with Him. More on this later, but we can’t earn our way into His favor. It is always only by His gracious will!
- b. To restore is to bring back to new, which in this case is synonymous with God smiling upon them with His favor rather than His discipline. Discipline is certainly a testimony of His favor in the sense that He loves them enough to do what’s needed to rescue them from idolatrous living, but there is no happiness in discipline.
- c. “Restore, ‘bring us back’ (to yourself). *Shine*. (*upon us* is added by NIV). The request is only for a change in God; that the frown become a smile.”¹¹
- d. “To “let your face shine” means to be present with someone with good results (Ps. 4:6; 31:16). This refrain is at the heart of Psalm 80, and at the heart of the refrain is the cry “come to save us!”¹²

The second part reveals the Psalm's context.

(2) The CONTEXT of the Psalm: They are suffering from God’s hand of discipline in response to their sin. (80:4-7)

A. 4 O LORD God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers? 5 You have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in full measure. 6 You make us an object of contention for our neighbors, and our enemies laugh among themselves. 7 Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved!

1. “The Lord is portrayed as the chief of a great army, “LORD God of hosts” (see again 1 Sam. 4:4; also 2 Kings 3:14; Isa. 6:3). The “how long” question

⁹ Limburg, J. (2000). [Psalms](#) (P. D. Miller & D. L. Bartlett, Eds.; p. 273). Westminster John Knox Press.

¹⁰ Motyer, J. A. (1994). [The Psalms](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 538). Inter-Varsity Press.

¹¹ Motyer, J. A. (1994). [The Psalms](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 538). Inter-Varsity Press.

¹² Limburg, J. (2000). [Psalms](#) (P. D. Miller & D. L. Bartlett, Eds.; p. 273). Westminster John Knox Press.

implies “Lord help us quickly. We can’t hold on much longer!” The same question occurs in the lament Psalms 13:1; 74:10; 94:3.”¹³

2. “The situation was as if **God** (like a Shepherd) had been feeding His people **tears**. He had brought painful calamity on them so that they wept uncontrollably (expressed in hyperbole that their tears were drunk **by the bowlful**). But the most painful aspect of God’s chastening was that Israel’s **enemies** mocked them (cf. 79:10). Again the refrain expressed the desire that God would **restore** His people by His favor (cf. 80:3, 19).”¹⁴
 3. “Daily Yahweh’s people are eating and drinking their own tears. Neighboring nations quarrel with one another over the territory which God’s people can no longer defend. These enemies laugh at the helpless condition of God’s people.”¹⁵
- B. Now, it’s important to know that Asaph and everybody else understood WHY God would bring punishment on them. They knew God’s law, and as such they knew God was very clear in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28: if they obeyed Him, He would provide them with an enormous abundance of blessings, but if they disobeyed Him, He would overwhelm them with crushing punishment. The contrast in Leviticus and Deuteronomy of His response to their obedience and sin is unmistakable and extreme. We don’t know specific circumstances surrounding this psalm, but clearly, the sorrow they were experiencing was God’s response to their sin!

The third part reveals their confusion.

(3) The Confusion of the Psalm: It **FELT** like God was permanently doing away with the people He had so gloriously established as His people. (80:8-16)

- A. God made it clear that He was going to use the Jewish people to bring the Messiah and the Kingdom of the Messiah into the world, but the depth and certainty of that promise was unrecognizable to them under the hand of God’s discipline. To them it FELT like God had stood them up only to destroy them. His punishment was so heavy and so harsh they couldn’t reconcile how they could survive it if God didn’t quickly act on their behalf! Asaph wrote,
- B. **8 You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. 9 You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land. 10 The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars**

¹³ Limburg, J. (2000). *Psalms* (P. D. Miller & D. L. Bartlett, Eds.; p. 274). Westminster John Knox Press.

¹⁴ Ross, A. P. (1985). *Psalms*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 852). Victor Books.

¹⁵ Smith, J. E. (1996). *The wisdom literature and Psalms* (p. 347). College Press Pub. Co.

with its branches. **11 It sent out its branches to the sea and its shoots to the River.**

1. Spurgeon wrote, “**Israel has a history compared with which the annals of all other nations are but poor and thin. Israel’s history is the roll call of priests and kings for God. ... what wonders God worked in the planting of Israel.**”¹⁶
2. “The figure of Israel as a vine may have been prompted by Genesis 49:22. It is used also in Isaiah 5:1–7; 27:2–6; Jeremiah 2:21; 12:10; Hosea 10:1. Jesus spoke of Himself as a Vine (John 15:1, 5) for He, being the promised Seed, represented and fulfilled God’s purposes for Israel. Where she failed, He succeeded.”¹⁷
3. All that God did to establish them as a people was so marvelous and miraculous that it could not be denied that God had chosen the Jewish people to display His glory. He had brought them out of Egypt, where they were nothing more than slaves, to become the dominant nation in their part of the world. It took many generations to build what they had, but now it FELT like it was all about to be washed away under the hand of God’s judgment! Therefore, Asaph wrote,

C. **12 Why then have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit? 13 The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it. 14 Turn again, O God of hosts! Look down from heaven, and see; have regard for this vine, 15 the stock that your right hand planted, and for the son whom you made strong for yourself. 16 They have burned it with fire; they have cut it down; may they perish at the rebuke of your face!**

1. “... prosperity had withered. By a rhetorical question the writer lamented that God had **broken down** the **walls** of the nation to enable others to plunder her. The Hebrew word for “walls” (also used in 89:40; Isa. 5:5) does not mean city walls but walls around vineyards. The enemies who plundered Israel are here described as **boars** and beasts.”¹⁸
2. “Balancing the “how long” question (v. 4), the psalmist asks, “Why?” (v. 12). Why would a farmer exert such effort in planting and nurturing a vineyard only to break down its walls and let it be destroyed (vv. 12–14; see also Isa. 5:1–7)?”¹⁹

¹⁶ Spurgeon. (2017). *The Spurgeon Study Bible: Notes* (p. 760). Holman Bible Publishers.

¹⁷ Ross, A. P. (1985). *Psalms*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 853). Victor Books.

¹⁸ Ross, A. P. (1985). *Psalms*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 852–853). Victor Books.

¹⁹ Limburg, J. (2000). *Psalms* (P. D. Miller & D. L. Bartlett, Eds.; p. 274). Westminster John Knox Press.

3. “The vine has been “cut down” as though it were fit for nothing. The Israelites perish, for God has not merely hidden his face; he has turned it upon them in anger.”²⁰
4. Because of the severity and length of God’s punishment, to Asaph and Israel, it FELT like God was done with them. Imagine knowing basically nothing but winning, and now no matter what you do, you can’t win! Therefore, after going through a sustained period of living in the abundance of His favor, the weight of His punishment was overwhelming.
5. Now this can’t be missed. The truth is, God promised the Jews that if they repented, He would restore them! For instance,

Note: 40 “But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers in their treachery that they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me, 41 so that I walked contrary to them and brought them into the land of their enemies—if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity, 42 then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. (Leviticus 26:40-42)

6. The Scriptures were clear about how intolerant God would be towards their sin, especially idolatry, but they were also clear that He would restore them if they truly repented. But God also never promised that He would not discipline them if they repented. When He said He would remember them if they repented, He was not promising that He would not complete the discipline or judgment He placed on them for rebelling against Him. In saying He would remember, He was saying that if they repented, He would complete His will in how He brought judgment on their sin to discipline them and then restore them to His favor! Here’s what I’m getting at:

Note: Repentance doesn’t free us from His discipline or the fruit of our sin in this life; it frees us for His discipline to RESTORE us!

7. This Biblical truth is universal to the Old and New Covenant. God doesn’t decide not to discipline us if we say we’re sorry because His discipline isn’t vengeance; it’s transformative. However, like any discipline, the only way it can be received as discipline instead of vengeance is to understand and believe it as transformative discipline and thus repent and embrace it as such!

²⁰ Smith, J. E. (1996). [*The wisdom literature and Psalms*](#) (pp. 347–348). College Press Pub. Co.

8. Unfortunately, however, it appears in this case the Jews had so distanced themselves from God and His Word that they lacked the fuel for their faith to believe God would restore them if they repented! God had already proven it to them many times over, but it didn't change how they felt nor why they felt it. The bottom line is that their weak faith in God led to their rebellion, and now that same weak faith struggled to understand His discipline and believe His promise to restore them.
9. They were sinful humans like us, ones who likewise struggle to believe that God's grace is truly sufficient to accept our repentance and restore us to the abundance of the promise He made to us. It's a lie of Satan and our own weak faith to not trust God to do what He said He would do, and as such, it fuels our rationality to stay in our sin instead of repenting. It's a confusion caused by our unwillingness to believe God's Word when our perception of circumstances appears to contradict it. This leads us to the fourth part of the psalm.

The fourth part reveals the resolve of the psalm.

(4) The Resolve of the Psalm: Asaph believed the people needed to SEE a measure of God's grace to ever truly repent! (80:17-19)

- A. **17 But let your hand be on the man of your right hand, the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself! 18 Then we shall not turn back from you; give us life, and we will call upon your name! 19 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts! Let your face shine, that we may be saved!**
 1. "The terms in v. 17, **the man of your right hand** and **the son of man**, probably refer to the people of Israel. Israel as a whole pledges itself to God. If he will **let his hand be on** Israel (that is, use his power on their behalf), then Israel will **not turn back** (again) **from** God and **will call upon** his **name**, that is, will exercise true faithfulness."²¹
 2. "A fresh intervention of Yahweh on behalf of his vine/ son would evoke a fresh response of grateful praise. A revived people would cheerfully call upon Yahweh's name. The psalm concludes with a repetition of v. 7 with a significant change. "God of hosts" here becomes "Yahweh God of hosts." Asaph clinches his appeal by the use of the covenant name Yahweh, along with the title which expresses universal sovereignty."²²
 3. "Rachel, dying in childbirth (Gn. 35:18) called her little boy Ben-Oni, 'son of my sorrow' but his father renamed him Benjamin, 'son of my right hand'. In this way the psalm comes full-circle: *Benjamin* (2) has sunk down in sorrow

²¹ Packer, J. I., Grudem, W., & Fernando, A., eds. (2012). [*ESV Global Study Bible*](#) (p. 792). Crossway.

²² Smith, J. E. (1996). [*The wisdom literature and Psalms*](#) (p. 348). College Press Pub. Co.

and loss but faith says that the Lord has a *man at your right hand, the son of man* (17) who is looked for as the solution, the one, therefore, in whom the face of God will again wear a smile of favour. In the neatest way v 15 allows the theme of the vine to develop, for (Gn. 49:22, another Joseph reference) 'son' (15) can mean a vine-tendril. Beyond what the psalmist may have known, the Lord did indeed watch over his vine-people until in the fullness of the time (Gal. 4:4) the expected son-tendril came to birth, the *man at your right hand* (17) in whom we have been given new life (18; Jn. 10:10) and an unprecedented access to God (Eph. 2:18) to invoke his *name*."²³

- B. Interestingly, as I just showed you in the previous point, God stated in His law that they had to repent for Him to restore them to His blessings, but here Asaph feels like the only way the people will have enough faith to repent is if God first shines His face on them to assure them He will indeed restore them if they repent. Now, because we don't know when this psalm was actually written, and thus we don't know the particular situation it's referring to, we can't therefore say how all this did or didn't work out in Asaph's lifetime.
- C. However, even though the reference to "son of man" in the psalm isn't in its immediate context a reference to Christ, the imagery of the solution and the name used in the solution can't be missed! The fact of the matter is that Asaph is right in what he was asking of God, and it's exactly what God was going to demonstrate in the greatest possible way to the entire world through His only eternally begotten Son, THE Son of Man—Jesus!

New Testament Application: The greatest demonstration possible of God's favor is Jesus. Your circumstances may not look or FEEL like God loves you, has forgiven you, or has restored you, but the cross and the empty tomb shout otherwise!

4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? (Romans 2:4, NIV)

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. (Titus 2:11-14)

Asaph got it right. If we could get a glimpse of God's grace, we could find the courage and strength to repent of our sin and actually live our lives in glad submission to Him, and that's exactly what God did in the loudest and brightest way possible in Christ! There is no

²³ Motyer, J. A. (1994). [The Psalms](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 538). Inter-Varsity Press.

greater testimony of His grace than to GIVE us weak sinners the glorious eternal privilege of eternal life as His fully favored sons and daughters forever, of living with Him in His perfect love and with all who are in Him forever, all because JESUS completely suffered the penalty of sin for us! We have God's favor justly! Jesus paid our debt! He fully and completely suffered the eternal damnation of our sin for us because He LOVES us—period!

Challenge: Will you believe the greatest TESTIMONY of grace ever bestowed, or ignore it?

In the confusion of unexplainable trials, the discipline of God, the guilt of your sin, or even the ugly fruit of your sin, will you trust in God's Word and His Gospel (God's clear revelation), repent, and praise Him for His restoration; or will you keep wallowing in your misery?

Instead of trusting God's love for you, will you keep running from it?

Instead of trusting He's in charge and working all things for His glory and your good, are you going to instead continue rebelling against Him?

Are you going to continue pressing forward in a life that is full of unexplainable, hard, and confusing things without the joy, clarity, and blessing of living this life on the firm foundation of God's love and grace that gives us every reason and motivation to trust and obey Him no matter what?