

*...In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help.
 From His temple He heard my voice; my cry came before Him, into his ears.
 The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook;
 they trembled because He was angry.
 Smoke rose from His nostrils; consuming fire came from His mouth, burning coals blazed out of it.
 He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under His feet.
 He mounted the cherubim and flew; He soared on the wings of the wind.
 He made darkness His covering, His canopy around Him— the dark rain clouds of the sky.
 Out of the brightness of His presence clouds advanced, with hailstones and bolts of lightning.
 The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded.
 He shot His arrows and scattered the enemy, with great bolts of lightning He routed them.
 The valleys of the sea were exposed and the foundations of the earth laid bare at Your rebuke, LORD, at
 the blast of breath from Your nostrils.
 He reached down from on high and took hold of me; He drew me out of deep waters.
 He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me.
 They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the LORD was my support.
 He brought me out into a spacious place; He rescued me because He delighted in me. – Ps. 18:6-19*

When I was in 4th grade, I faced my first real bully. Scott was in 5th grade and wanted my things. Innocent as I was, I told him no. That day, my innocence was lost as I suddenly and harshly learned that the world is not an inherently peaceful, fair, or good place as I had believed for 9 years. Fear became my constant companion as I lived forward from that event. Many people I've spoken with over the years have had similar experiences.

I've always loved superhero stories, mostly because the strong hero swoops in to rescue the helpless victim, and the villains get their just rewards, whether prison or banishment. Reading Ps. 18 today brought me back to both that 4th grade moment and those superhero stories. While David probably didn't know about superheroes, he understood the need for a more powerful force of justice in the world. The youngest of 8 brothers, David knew what it was to be picked on and bullied. And so he writes of God as if God were a superhero.

Look at the scene and see if you identify with any of this:

1. David is in distress with enemies surrounding him, drowning him
 In these days of global pandemic, people have shared with me this very thing. They feel like they're drowning in news, in fear, in loneliness. They are surrounded by walls, by masks, by germs and viruses. They are in distress as they look to an uncertain and sometimes hopeless future.
2. David cries out to his hero for help
 In desperation, in anger or fear, we cry out for help. I know many of our churches are as they face another month without income, with sickness and death among their people. I know that fear is one of the greatest prayer motivators we have. When we are afraid, we pray like never before.
3. God hears his cry.
 Picture God on His throne in His temple in heaven, hearing your personal and particular cry among the millions. God hears our prayers, and God answers them. Sometimes the answer is pretty cryptic, and other times it is quiet. But our cry is always heard and always answered.
4. God comes to the rescue.
 The images here are better than any Marvel movie. God thunders down from heaven to rescue us, smiting the earth, scattering our enemies, and rescuing us *because He delights in us*. God loves us and gets angry when we are victimized, whether by a person, a human system, or a virus.

One day as my son was walking home from elementary school, a pair of local older boys decided he was a good target for their snowball throwing. I happened to be watching out the window, and as soon as I saw what was happening, rage began to build in my stomach. I walked out the front door and joined my son on his walk. As soon as the other boys saw me, the snowballs stopped and they ran home. No trembling in the earth, no hailstones, no bolts of lightning. Just my presence bringing comfort to my son and justice to the situation. How much more so does God's presence, with all the power and potential He brings, bring comfort to us and justice to our world?

What are the things bullying you right now?

Have you cried out to God about it?

Where have you seen God show up, and how has it brought you comfort?

Do you know that God loves you so much, He gets enraged at the idea of you being victimized?