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Arise 2017

Session 1

Isaiah 60:1, "Arise [from spiritual depression to a new life], shine [be radiant with the glory and brilliance of the Lord]; for your light has come, And the glory and brilliance of the Lord has risen upon you.

Firstly, let us look at this verse in the context and then at how this applies to us specifically as we are starting this conference after "Liberty 2016," where we studied in detail about the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah speaks about God and His judgement immediately before this prophecy is uttered. Chapters 60-62 are the heart of the third section of Isaiah (56-66).

Cyrus the Persian King overthrew the Babylonians and established the Persian Empire (Isaiah 44:24; 45:1). Cyrus understood the plan of God and acted kindly towards the people of God, showing them mercy more than any of the Babylonian kings. In 538 BC, Cyrus issued a decree that allowed the Israelites to return to their homeland (Ezra 1:1-4).

Despite the decree from the Empire, promises of the prophets and the urging of the priests, there was no mass exodus back to Israel. Many Israelites who were exiles had grown comfortable in Babylon and were unwilling to leave. Even the handful that did return faced a wasted land, a city and temple in ruins, and hostile neighbours (Ezra 4). The glorious promises of a new future had not immediately translated into blessing and prosperity.

Following the return from Babylon, people faced the following new crises:

- No city walls,
- Looting bandits,
- Threatening outlaws,
- No central government,
- No leadership and little means of enforcing laws,
- No temple, religious life takes a back seat,
- Lethargy,
- Indifference and

Notes:

➤ Cynicism.

The people began to lose sight of who they were as God's people. They began to be careless in how they lived out being God's people. They began to doubt the future that God had promised.

The Holy Spirit has constructed this entire chapter carefully. By noting changes in pronouns marking new speakers, we see that the chapter has four main sections:

1. The people challenge God (1)
2. The prophet answers with an accusation (2-8)
3. The people respond with a confession of guilt (9-15a)
4. God reacts with mercy (15b-21).

Isaiah 59:21, "As for Me," says the Lord, "this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the Lord, "from this time and forevermore."

This is the promise from God to the Israelites when they were going through what they were at that point in time.

- They were redeemed by God from the slavery in Egypt
- They were given the Promised Land
- When the nation forgot God, they were oppressed by enemies
- God rescued them again and brought them back to the land
- Yet, they failed to see what God was doing in their life.

When the prophet Isaiah looks at the world he lives in, he sees so much darkness.

Isaiah 60:2, For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the Lord will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you.

A deep darkness, a thick darkness.

Notes:

Things were not quite this dark during the days of Isaiah, yet it was still a dark time in the history of Israel. To be in "darkness" means to not know God and the things of God. It means to be ignorant of divine things. I think of the complaint the Lord Himself makes through the prophets:

Isaiah 1:3, The ox knows its owner And the donkey its master's crib; But Israel does not know, My people do not consider."

In other words, the people are dumber than cattle and donkeys because these animals, at least, know their master. As Hosea's words reiterate:

Hosea 4:6 ... my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.

Because of the ignorance of God and the things of God, people fall into sin, error, and falsehood. To live in darkness means you want nothing to do with the light. Says John at the beginning of the Gospel:

John 1:5, The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

John 3:19, This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

The world lives in darkness. Hence, it wants nothing to do with the light. In fact, it fears the light. It fears the light because it shows the darkness for what it is.

A story on a closer look:

Many years ago, while on a visit to America, a wealthy Chinese businessman was fascinated by a powerful microscope. Looking through its lens to study crystals and the petals of flowers, he was amazed at their beauty and detail. So he decided to purchase one of these devices and take it back to China. He thoroughly enjoyed using it until one day he examined some rice he was planning to eat for dinner. Much to his dismay, he discovered that tiny living creatures were crawling in it. Since he was especially fond of this staple food in his daily diet, he wondered what to do. Finally he concluded that there was only one way out of his dilemma -- he would destroy the instrument that

Notes:

caused him to discover the distasteful fact! So he smashed the microscope to pieces.

"How foolish!" you say. But many people do the same thing with the light of the Gospel. They hate it and would like to get rid of it because it reveals their evil nature.

Isaiah 9:2 says, "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned"

Arise, shine; for your light has come!

After the thick and desperate *darkness* described in Isaiah 59:9-10, this is the glorious rescue from the Redeemer.

Isaiah 59:9-11 describes Israel as walking in darkness, being in prison, groping along the walls, having no eyes, groaning in anguish, and, finally, dead.

- How can such a people rise and shine?
- They cannot, for they are morally unable.
- How can those who are dead in trespasses and sins rise and shine?
- How can darkness become light?
- How can the dead live?
- How can the self-absorbed love others?
- How can the thief give and the liar tell the truth?

We need a Redeemer, one who is light, one who will give sight to the blind and life to the dead. Only such a Redeemer can cause us to rise and shine.

The people of Jerusalem have suffered through the darkness for a very long time in their exile. A difficult return to Jerusalem, a city that lay in ruins, with neighbours opposing the rebuilding of the city and the temple. The people had been beaten down by circumstances. The circumstances brought upon them by their sin constituted God's judgment. However, God has not punished them to destroy them, but to redeem them. Now the time of their redemption has come, and it is time for them to receive it. They have been

Notes:

living in the darkness of despair, but their “light has come,” “the glory of God is risen on” them.

That light is Yahweh, who has seemed so absent for so long.

Light has come -- therefore, God tells His people to *respond* to it, and to **arise** and **shine**!

- Darkness is for lying down; **light** is for rising up.
- Darkness is for gloom and sleep; **light** is for shining.
- When the **light has come**, we must respond, and **arise, shine**!

First, we receive God's light (**your light has come**), and then we have a service to put forth (**arise, shine**).

You can't shine until **your light has come**, but once it has come, there is something wrong if you don't **arise** and **shine**!

Our life's circumstances are almost similar to what the Israelites were experiencing in the time Isaiah the prophet was prophesying.

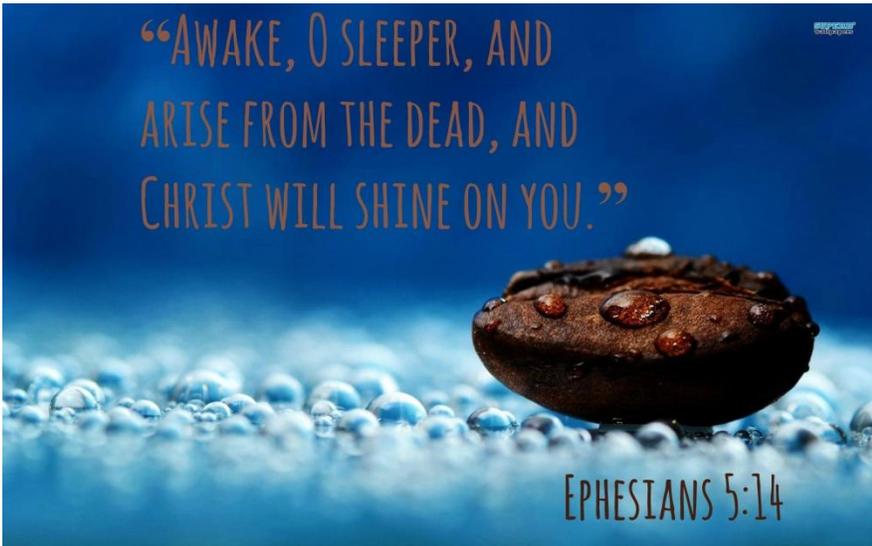
- We are redeemed by God when we were dead in our sins.
- We have been given the Holy spirit as our guarantee
- We have been given the wonderful promise of eternity with our Lord
- When we fail, we ask for His forgiveness, and He forgives us and restores us
- We have been given the sonship through the Holy Spirit
- Yet, we forget everything when we are oppressed by enemies
- Yet, at times we fail to see what God was doing in our life.

There is a parallelism here between “light” and “glory.” The glory of the Lord is “often associated with brightness or splendour in divine appearances.

*Ephesians 5:14, Therefore He says: “Awake, you who sleep, **Arise** from the dead, And Christ will give you **light**.”*

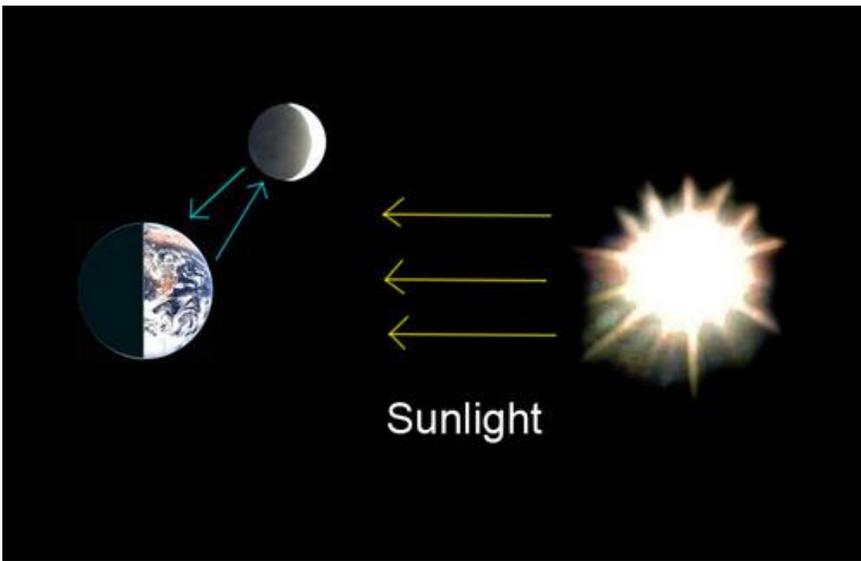
Arising and shining have to happen in succession.

Notes:



*Jonah 1:6, So the captain came to him, and said to him, "What do you mean, sleeper? **Arise**, call on your God; perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish."*

The **moon** has no **light** of its own. It reflects the sun's **light**. At any time, half of the Earth and half of the **moon** are lit by the sun.



We, however, are **not** asked to **reflect** but to shine!

Notes:

Jesus is called the Sun of Righteousness.

*Malachi 4:2, But to you who fear My name **The Sun of Righteousness** shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves*

*Luke 1:78-79, Through the tender mercy of our God, With **which the Dayspring** from on high has visited us; ⁷⁹**To give light to those who sit in darkness** and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace."*

Unlike the moon and Earth, we are never asked to reflect, but to shine from the light we have received.

*Ephesians 5:8, For you were once darkness, but **now you are light in the Lord.** Walk as children of light*

The glory of the Lord is risen upon you.

'Glory' is the manifested presence of God with all His attributes. The manifested presence can be experienced in all our senses.

*Psalm 19:1-4, The heavens declare the **glory of God**; And the firmament shows His handiwork. ²Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. ³There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. ⁴Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world.*

We have been created by God for His glory to be revealed.

*Isaiah 43:7, Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for **My glory**; I have formed him, yes, I have made him."*

When Apostle John writes, he says that we have beheld the glory of God. The glory - full of His grace and truth - was present with them.

*John 1:14, And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and **we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.***

*John 2:11, This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and **manifested His glory**; and His disciples believed in Him.*

Notes:

Christ living inside of every believer is the secret of the glory of God. Remember what had happened when Adam sinned.

Romans 3:23, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Thus, the sin has made us fall short of the glory of God; however, we thank God for Jesus Christ so that we can be restored to the original intended purpose of God to live in His glory.

Colossians 1:27, To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

This may prompt you to remember the scripture from Isaiah!

Isaiah 42:8, I am the Lord, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.

But you are not just another person! You are a Christian - hidden in Christ!

Colossians 3:3, For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

This is what Jesus prayed when He wanted all the believers to live in the glory of God, which was given to Him by God.

John 17:24, "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

Jesus prayed to the Father that we too behold His glory.

Matthew 5:16, Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

When people see the glory of God in you, they should be able to recognise that it's God.

You and I should be able to praise God to give Him the glory!

Notes:

Arise my dear brothers and sisters!

Let your light shine!

Let the glory of our Lord be risen upon you!!

Let His name be glorified among all the people!!!

Notes:

Notes:

Morning Devotion

Living in the presence of God continuously

God wants to have intimate fellowship with us and that's why Adam and Eve were created. God had intimate fellowship with both Adam and Eve and they were enjoying the sweet presence of God before the fall.

Genesis 3:8, And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

When Adam and Eve failed and had fallen into sin, the human kind lost its ability to be in the physical presence of the Lord.

*Exodus 33:20, But He said, "You cannot see My face; for **no man shall see Me, and live.**"*

Though God's presence is everywhere, the Bible speaks of being before God in heaven as God's presence. Bible also speaks of His special presence in certain locations (such as in Jerusalem), and other times in which He revealed Himself at a particular time or place uniquely.

Jeremiah speaks of a time when God's presence will dwell in a special way in Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 3:17, "At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the LORD, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart."

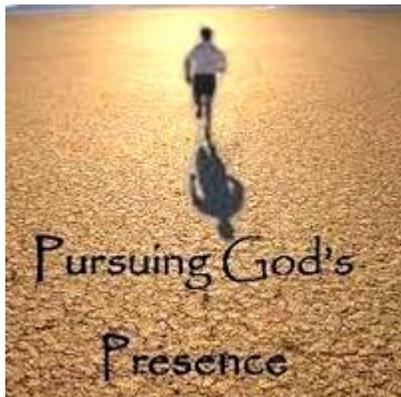
We do not need to go somewhere special to seek His presence, but are called to worship Him and live guided by His Spirit that lives within us. We may sense God's presence in a special way emotionally at times, yet God is present at all times and in all places and in each believer. This is one of the reasons why I am so against preachers and pastors taking people to Jerusalem saying we feel the presence of God here. This is completely contrary to the word of God and utter lie. It has become a business copied from the worldly system. The Hindus travel to Kasi and Rameshwaram on a spiritual journey to wash

Notes:

their sins and the Muslims go to Mecca. Similarly, some so-called Christians take gullible people to Jerusalem.

Right now, only the holy, sinless angels are in the physical presence of God.

Luke 1:19, And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.



Good news is that we will live with Him forever!!

Revelation 21:1-4, Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

All of heaven has collided with the whole earth to make a perfect sanctuary for God to dwell with man. Eden has returned and expanded into a new heaven and new earth where all of God's people enjoy His presence eternally.

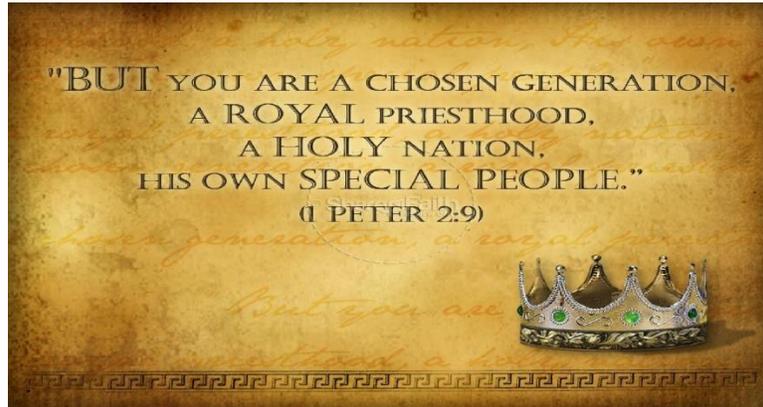
Great news is that at present we have the presence of God within us by the indwelling of His Holy Spirit.

Notes:

John 14:6, And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.

It's not for a set period of time – it is forever!

1 Peter 2:9, But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light;



If we belong to Him, will He not be present among us? We never lose the reality of God's presence, no matter how badly we fail.

We never sink so far as to banish the Holy Spirit. We can anger God because of our sin, but true believers never lose the presence of the Holy Spirit. While we will never lose the reality of God's presence, we might lose the "sense" of His presence. Why we lose the sense of His presence?

Our feelings tell us that at times we don't feel the presence of God but we shouldn't be driven by our emotions when it comes to our trust in God. Because Scripture says the "righteous shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17) and "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6); hence, we shouldn't have to feel God to know He's there.

Any believer knows that there are times of spiritual leanness when perhaps the Lord determines to test our faith. Does He not push us through the winnowing flames of affliction that we might be all the more pure (Job 23:10; 1 Peter 1:7).

Notes:

Remember that God has promised us that He will never leave us. But it is also our responsibility to abide in Him and obey Him.

*John 14:23, Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and **We will come to him and make Our home with him.***

*John 15:4, **Abide in Me, and I in you.** As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.*

The key to continue in His presence is to make sure there is nothing between you and God. Obedience and being faithful to His will and His words will make sure you are living in His presence continually.

We will study the life of David on how he was able to keep himself in the presence of God in all his troubles and his glorious days.

Here are some practical help:

1. Be honest and open with Him

Make sure there is nothing blocking your communication with God. God hasn't left you, but your sensitivity to His presence may be affected by any unconfessed sins.

Psalm 32:3-5, When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. ⁴For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.

Selah

⁵I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Selah

In case you feel that you and God haven't spoken to each other lately, then confess to God what's in your heart honestly and openly. Then, you will hear Him and He will hear you.

Notes:



1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Then, your relationship will be restored and once again the communication will flow.

2. Read the word of God Aloud!

When you read His word aloud, you are the first person to hear it! *Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God* (Romans 10:17).

When you audibly speak God's inspired Word, you will sense its power and His presence.

As **Hebrews 4:12** says, "*living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword*". That sharp sword will either make you aware of its weight or prick your heart through conviction, inspiration, or determination.

Notes:

3. Make sure nothing comes between you and God

Not your ministry, your spouse, your children or anything for that matter, can come between you and God. Make sure there is no hindrance in obedience to God.

Prayer:

Let me echo the prayer of David in Psalm 139:23-24,

***Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;
And see if there is any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.
Amen!***

Notes:

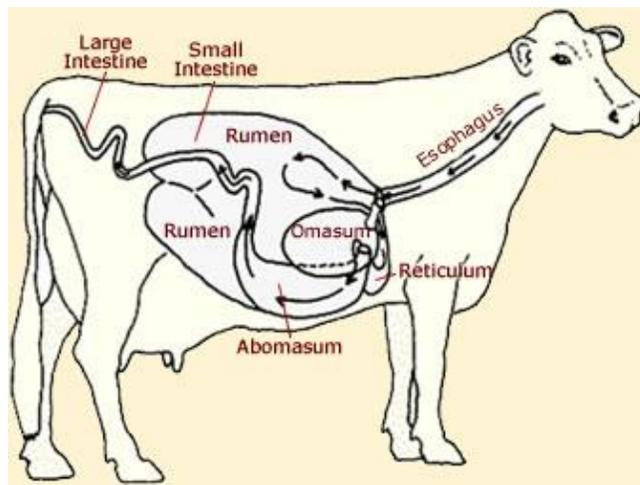
Selah

The word '**selah**' appears in our Bible about 74 times and in Psalms alone 71 times. We will come across this many times in this conference.

Hebrew word related to *selah* is *calah*, which means "to hang" or "to measure or weigh in the balances."

In simple terms it's a like a cow who eats grass and digests. Cows must chew their food twice in order to digest it properly.

When a cow first takes a bite, it chews just enough to moisten the food. Once swallowed, the food goes into the first section, the rumen, where it mixes with other acidic digestive liquids and is softened. The softened food is called cud, small balls of food.



Next, the rumen muscles send the cud back up to the cow's mouth, where it is re-chewed and swallowed again, this time going to the Omasum section of stomach in order to squeeze out all of the moisture.

Finally, the food enters the last part, Abomasum of the stomach where it mixes with digestive juices and makes its way to the intestine to be completely digested.

Notes:

Cud chewing is often used as an indicator of a healthy and comfortable herd. A happy, healthy animal will produce more milk or have a higher production of muscle.

This is what exactly we ought to do with the word of God. Especially David wants us to moisture our hearts first, then bring it back remove all the unwanted stuff and finally chew it again so that the word of God will make an impact in your life.

If we don't do '**Selah**' then we will have digestive problem, will be only burping not producing healthy spiritual milk.

The Amplified Bible adds "pause and calmly think about that" to each verse where '*selah*' appears.

Life application study from the Life of David

In this Bible study we are going to study the physical life of David and how he endured his life on earth. There are many circumstances in his life we can relate.

We are NOT going to looking into the deeper spiritual meaning of Psalms he had written. There are many Psalms he had written were Messianic. So this study only helps us to understand how we can manage our physical life in line with spiritual meaning. So that we will be called as '***A man/woman after MY own heart***' as how God called David.

Notes:

1. *When God calls you and anoints you*

Psalm 23

Circumstances: Probably the first of Psalms written by David soon after he was anointed as a king by Prophet Samuel while he was a shepherd boy. Still he continued to be the shepherd of his sheep.

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 16:1-23 ; 17:20 and 32-37.

The Lord is my shepherd;

I shall not want.

2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside the still waters.

3 He restores my soul;

He leads me in the paths of righteousness

For His name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil;

For You are with me;

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You anoint my head with oil;

My cup runs over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

All the days of my life;

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.

Everyone knows this Psalm, even the non-Christians. Most Christians are able to recite the Psalm from their memory. The main theme of this Psalm is about the deep faith and hope available to the child of God. What a wonderful God He is who watches over us.

Notes:

David illustrates the provision of the Lord, both physical and spiritual.

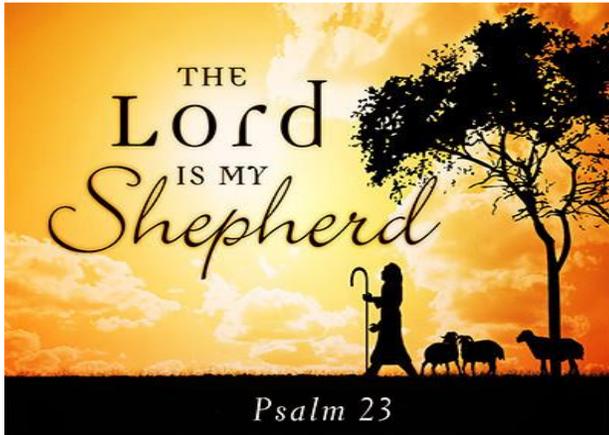
V1-3 David describes the protection of the Lord. As a shepherd, he travels through dangerous places and in the presence of enemies.

V4-5 David ends this Psalm with an expression of faith and hope in the Lord's preservation, that God will furnish the goodness and mercy needed throughout life.

V6, David will abide in the house of the Lord forever.

Spiritually, we as a Christian see in this psalm a wonderful foreshadowing of "The Good Shepherd," Jesus Christ, who gave His life for His sheep and even now watches over us (John 10:11-15; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 5:4).

A good follow-up to this psalm is Psalm 100, which expresses the praise we should render to God as His people and the sheep of His pasture.



V1-3, Provision of the Shepherd

The Lord is my shepherd;

I have all that I need.

2 He lets me rest in green meadows;

he leads me beside peaceful streams.

3 He renews my strength.

Notes:

*He guides me along right paths,
bringing honour to his name. (NLT)*

a) Physical – No lack

1. The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want (Luke 12:22-32; Matthew 6:25-33)
2. He makes me lie down in green pastures
3. He leads me besides still waters (Revelation 7:17)

b) Spiritual – No lack

1. He restores my soul (Revelation 3:19)
2. He leads me to the path of righteousness (1 Corinthians 10:13 & 1John 1:27)

V4-5, Protection of the Shepherd

4. Even when the way goes through

Death Valley,

I'm not afraid when you walk at my side.

Your trusty shepherd's crook makes me feel secure.

5. You serve me a six-course dinner right in front of my enemies.

You revive my drooping head ;my cup brims with blessing.(MSG)

1. He is with me, so I fear no evil (Hebrews 13:5-6)
2. His rod and staff comfort me (Hebrews 12:5-11)

V5, Presence of the Shepherd

1. Prepares a table in the presence of my enemies (John 16:33)
2. Anoints my head with oil (Ephesians 3:20)

Notes:

V6, Preservation of the Shepherd

*6. I know that your goodness and love will be with me all my life;
and your house will be my home as long as I live.(GNT)*

1. Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life (2 Timothy 4:18)
2. Dwell in the house of the Lord forever (John 14:1-3)

Apostle Paul

When Apostle Paul - while he was still Saul - was so keen to kill those following 'the way,' the Lord Jesus meets with him and he was asked to go to Damascus and wait (Acts9).

*Acts 9:17-18, ¹⁷ And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."¹⁸ Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and **he arose and was baptized.***

After Paul was baptised and anointed, his immediate response was to preach the Gospel.

Acts 9:20, Immediately he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

Look at Jesus

Luke 4:18-19, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted, To proclaim liberty to the captive And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; ¹⁹ To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Jesus was very clear about His mandate and was quick to respond to the call upon His life. He made that as the main purpose in His life.

Notes:

Luke 4:42-43, ⁴² Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; ⁴³ but He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent."

Application

What is the main theme in this Psalm?

The Lord is my shepherd and I shall not want (lack anything)

How real is it and has it sunk into your thinking?

How does David illustrate the physical necessities provided by the Lord?

- The Lord makes him to lie down in green pastures
- The Lord leads him besides the still waters
- Jesus promised us that our heavenly Father will take care of all our needs. Are you still looking and seeking the physical needs? What was your prayer this morning?
- If you are still seeking the physical needs, why are you NOT able to put your trust in the Lord to meet all your needs?

How does David describe the spiritual necessities provided by the Lord?

- The Lord restores his soul
- The Lord leads him in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake
- Our Lord has anointed us with His Holy Spirit and He will lead us into all truth. How much does your life depend upon listening to Him?
- Are you seeking for the spiritual needs every day?

What protection or comfort does the Lord provide when one walks through the valley of the shadow of death?

We have not been given a promise that we will be problem free rather that we will have troubles and trials for the sake of Christ.

Notes:

- The comfort of His presence
- His comfort of His rod and staff
- Have you been comforted and lead by His spirit every day? Are you seeking that every day?

What provisions does the Lord furnish in the presence of one’s enemies?

- He prepares a table
- He anoints one's head with oil
- He provides a cup that runs over

What does the Lord provide to ensure that He will preserve us in this life?

Goodness and mercy, all the days of our life.

What wonderful hope do we have for eternity?

We will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Personal:

Have you been anointed?

Do you know your call and purpose?

What are you doing now that is taking you closer to your call?



1 Samuel 16:12,

And the Lord said, “Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!”

Notes:

Notes:

2. *When you stand for God's name, the victory brings you to new heights*

Psalm 9

Circumstances: Young David kills the giant Goliath in the battle with his sling shot. A celebration of Victory Psalm.

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 17

The entire focus of this Psalm is on God alone! Let me give you a brief outline of this Psalm.

1. Personal praise of God V1-2
2. God's judgement on enemies V 3-6
3. Hope in God's justice V 7-10
4. Praising God as a nation V 11-14
5. God's judgement upon nations V 15-18
6. Hope in God's justice V 19-20

The outline reinforces the symmetrical set up of the lines of personal praise and praising as a nation.

1. *Personal Praise of God V1-2*

I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart;

I will tell of all Your marvelous works.

2 I will be glad and rejoice in You;

I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.

As we have seen from the circumstances, David's focus is on what he will do with God.

All the four lines of this Psalm start with "I Will"

Notes:

- **I will** praise *You*, O Lord, with my whole heart;
- **I will** tell of all Your marvellous works.
- **I will** be glad and rejoice in You;
- **I will** sing praise to Your name, O Most High.

Praising God lets us forget our troubles while at the same time deepening our confidence and faith in God. When you see trouble, just start praising God.

2. *God's Judgement on Enemies V 3-6*

*3 When my enemies turn back,
They shall fall and perish at Your presence.
4 For You have maintained my right and my cause;
You sat on the throne judging in righteousness.
5 You have rebuked the nations,
You have destroyed the wicked;
You have blotted out their name forever and ever.
6 O enemy, destructions are finished forever!
And you have destroyed cities;
Even their memory has perished.*

David put his hope on God who would bring down the ungodly. Often times, we focus on our present troubles and fail to see what the Lord is doing.

Think of the nations mentioned in the first five books of the Bible (Exodus 33:2):

- Canaanite
- Amorite
- Hittite
- Perizzite
- Hivite
- Jebusite

Notes:

Where are they now?

The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia says of the Hivites as thus: "No name resembling Hivite has yet been found in the Egyptian and Babylonian inscriptions.

They were a great nation ruling with might and strength, and everyone feared them once but now they no longer exist.

Because God, in His time and in His ways, is pulling down those powers that oppose Him.

3. *Hope in God's justice V 7-10*

7 But the Lord shall endure forever;

He has prepared His throne for judgment.

8 He shall judge the world in righteousness,

And He shall administer judgment for the peoples in uprightness.

9 The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed,

A refuge in times of trouble.

10 And those who know Your name will put their trust in You;

For You, Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You.

Verse 7 is the heart of the psalm. In contrast to evil nations that are being destroyed, "the Lord shall endure forever."



The centre of all our hope is that the Lord rules.

Check out the beautiful language used in verse 10. To know God's name is to know God.

"Name" here stands for the total Person, His character, His likes, His dislikes, His desires and more. Those who know the Lord, know

that they can trust the Lord for He still rules!

Notes:

4. Praising God as a nation V 11-14

11 Sing praises to the Lord, who dwells in Zion!

Declare His deeds among the people.

12 When He avenges blood, He remembers them;

He does not forget the cry of the humble.

13 Have mercy on me, O Lord!

Consider my trouble from those who hate me,

You who lift me up from the gates of death,

14 That I may tell of all Your praise

In the gates of the daughter of Zion.

I will rejoice in Your salvation.

David calls upon those who live in Zion to sing praises to God. Then, he urges God to save so that he will live to praise Him.

5. God's judgement upon nations V 15-18

15 The nations have sunk down in the pit which they made;

In the net which they hid, their own foot is caught.

16 The Lord is known by the judgment He executes;

The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.

Selah

17 The wicked shall be turned into hell,

And all the nations that forget God.

18 For the needy shall not always be forgotten;

The expectation of the poor shall not perish forever.

The nations are caught up in their own sin so David asks God to tear them down because their own sin will destroy them. This is the nature of sin, which not only destroys the eternal future but also makes the present life miserable. David sees God presently at work, and that work goes on into the future. This is true trust in God. The one who knows that God rules will look upon

Notes:

wickedness and say "That can't last. I won't join with that because I know God is defeating that and will defeat that. Things can't continue as they are because God is at work and evil will be judged."

God's name and reputation are at stake here! God must destroy evil to vindicate His own righteousness.

6. *Hope in God's justice V 19-20*

19 Arise, O Lord,

Do not let man prevail;

Let the nations be judged in Your sight.

20 Put them in fear, O Lord,

That the nations may know themselves to be but men.

Selah

What a way to close the setting! David wants the nations to know who God is by Him executing judgement upon the nations.

God will and must act to establish His name before all creature!!

The Life of Jesus

After God anoints Jesus, a string of great miracles happen in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. But how did our Lord handle them all?

Let us take a look at Mark chapter 1.

Mark 1:29-31, ²⁹ Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰ But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. ³¹ So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.

After Peters' mother-in-law gets healed, the news spreads across the town.

Notes:

Mark 1:32-34, ³² At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. ³³ And the whole city was gathered together at the door. ³⁴ Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

- A big revival takes place
- The whole city is gathered
- Everyone gets healed
- All the demon-possessed get delivered.

What a way to open up a ministry or set up a ministry office; yet, what did Jesus do?

Mark 1:35-39, ³⁵ Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. ³⁶ And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him. ³⁷ When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You." ³⁸ But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth." ³⁹ And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

Look at Jesus' focus on His ministry and His purpose!

Neither fame nor popularity among the people could distract Jesus from His focus on the plans and purpose of God.

God and His purpose were the centre of His life.

Application

What does God do for us?

God turns our enemies back so that they stumble and then perish; He even blots out their name. As David wrote this psalm, he could see God defeating Israel's enemies in his mind's eye, and even his personal enemies who had pursued him. We can apply this to our lives with regard to the enemies we

Notes:

face. God is always at work to defeat them, and if we will continue to obey and follow Him, we will eventually win.

How should we thank Him?

We the people of God must thank God, tell of His wonders, be glad about Him and sing praises to Him.

Philippians 4:6-7, Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Are you able to thank Him always!!

Why should we trust Him?

He is truly trustworthy because His throne is established forever, and He is just. He will always bring about justice for the oppressed and enforce justice against the oppressor. He is so powerful that all He has to do is speak the word and the oppressing person or nation is destroyed.

History has shown that He had never forsaken those who trust in Him. God cares, He is powerful, He is just, and He is dependable.

How could we not trust Him and take refuge in Him in our times of trouble?

What God is aware of and what will He do about it?

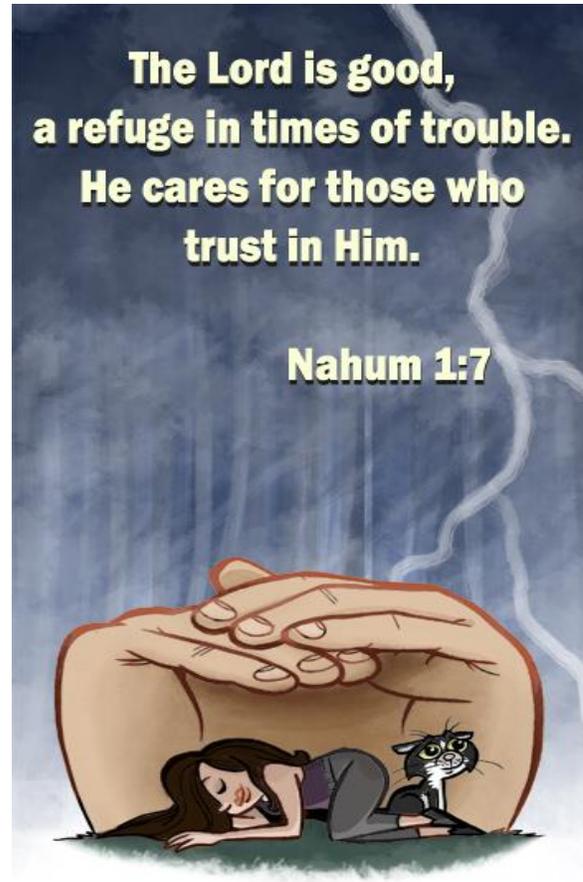
God is aware of blood that is shed and the cries of the afflicted. This is the constant theme of the scripture. Whenever God's people cry out, He responds to them. In effect, this nullifies the actions of the enemy because He stands up for them. God is our advocate. He allows the oppressor to fall into the trap they have set for others, but ensures that the needy will not be forgotten or their hope be allowed to fail.

God will ultimately bring the enemy to justice. This should make us, as God's people, feel good and secure because no matter what we are going through, God is aware and will look out for us.

Notes:

2 Chronicles 16:9, For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, **to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.** In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars."

Nahum 1:7, The Lord is good, **A stronghold in the day of trouble; And He knows those who trust in Him.**



God is defeating His enemies. God is protecting His people. God is establishing His rule.

That may not always come as speedily as I might desire, or even in my lifetime. My focus is upon God and his purpose. But I know God's name and so I must put my trust in God. "The Lord will endure forever!"

Notes:

Notes:

3. *When you have been pursued by the person whom you have helped to secure his position*

Psalm 59

Circumstances: Saul sends assassins to watch and look out for an opportunity to kill David

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 18:11-18 & 1 Samuel 19:11-12

To the Chief Musician. Set to "Do Not Destroy." A Michtam of David when Saul sent men, and they watched the house in order to kill him.

(Message Translation is used here for better understanding)

David brings great victory for the nation of Israel, saving King Saul from the biggest threat and looming defeat from Goliath. What reward does David get in return??

Saul sends his men to wait outside the house of David to finish him off!!

Why could Saul not appreciate and celebrate the victory of David? Most Christians fail in this regard. If you can't celebrate someone else's victory, you may never have yours!!

Psalm 59

I want you to imagine for a moment that you are living in a house that is surrounded by men with weapons who are lying low and waiting to kill you.

- You can't call the police
- Can't call 911
- Can't seek help from your friends
- You can't appeal to anyone about your innocence
- Sheer evil and wickedness against you

I can't imagine how such life would be? Where will my focus be??

Notes:

What is it like to be surrounded at night by vicious men who have a command from the king to kill you?

Verses 6–7 try to help us feel what it is like.

They come out at night, snarling like vicious dogs as they prowl the streets. ⁷Listen to the filth that comes from their mouths; their words cut like swords. "After all, who can hear us?" they sneer.

And again in verses 14–15,

My enemies come out at night, snarling like vicious dogs as they prowl the streets. ¹⁵They scavenge for food but go to sleep unsatisfied.

The men who came after David were like packs of bloodthirsty wild dogs that surround a trapped or wounded animal and tear it to shreds when they are starving.

The real life story of John and Betty Stam

On December 6, 1934, in Tsingteh, China, John and Betty Stam were killed for their faith in Christ. Betty was bathing their three-month old daughter when the Red Army surrounded their house. They took them captive and made them walk to Miaosheo. There they bound John to a post for the night. The next day they forced John and Betty to walk in their underwear through the streets of the town and forced the people to come watch the execution. Outside town, in a clump of pine trees, they beheaded John Stam with a sword while his wife watched. And then when she fell over his body, they beheaded her.

John and Betty Stam went to Moody Bible Institute, they were in their mid-twenties, they had a three-month old daughter, and they were beheaded by howling dogs. It was no movie. And neither is Psalm 59.

Notes:



John and Betty Stam

Now let us look at the Psalm that David sang.

V 1-2, Prayer for Deliverance

*My God! Rescue me from my enemies defend me from these mutineers.
Rescue me from their dirty tricks, save me from their hit men.*

Look at the way David addresses God when he prays!

- My God (Psalm 59:1)
- My defence (Psalm 59:9, 17)
- My God of mercy (Psalm 59:10, 17)
- My Strength (Psalm 59:17, 9)

Saul who holds the highest position in the government of Israel at the time plots to assassinate David. Many of Saul's vassals thought they might find favour in his eyes if they joined the bandwagon for assassinating David. Thus, David becomes the ultimate target for many. Not oblivious to the impending danger, David did not look to anyone but God for help.

Notes:

V 3-5, Explaining the need

3-4 Desperadoes have ganged up on me, they're hiding in ambush for me. I did nothing to deserve this, God, crossed no one, wronged no one. All the same, they're after me, determined to get me.

4-5 Wake up and see for yourself! You're God, God-of-Angel-Armies, Israel's God! Get on the job and take care of these pagans, don't be soft on these hard cases.

Selah

David didn't make a claim to sinless perfection. He simply understood and said to God that there was no justified reason at all for Saul to send the bloodthirsty assassins against him.

David feared he would die if God were asleep to his need. He asked God to be active for him and to look upon his crisis.

- He was *Yahweh*, the covenant God of Israel (**Lord**)
- He was *Elohim Sabaoth*, the commander of heavenly armies (**God of hosts**)
- He was *Elohi Israel*, the God of His chosen people (**God of Israel**)

Selah

- “*Selah*,‘ surely God will have them in contempt;
- ‘*Selah*,‘ surely God shall shake their bones, shake their best actions, and discover their impurity;
- ‘*Selah*,‘ surely God’s hand shall be heavy upon them, and they shall not discern it to be His hand till they are consumed.
- ‘*Selah*,‘ surely, verily, amen, this is a faithful, an infallible truth; as the Lord lives, it shall be so.”

Notes:

V 6-7, Arrogance of the Enemies

They return when the sun goes down, They howl like coyotes, ringing the city.

Then suddenly they're all at the gate, Snarling invective, drawn daggers in their teeth. They think they'll never get caught.

David describe the enemies as

1. Howling dogs
2. Dogs that go around
3. Who keep belching (belch means to emit wind noisily from the stomach through the mouth.)
4. With no fear of God

They are either

- a) Israelite practical atheists or
- b) Pagans/idolaters

V 8- 10, David's strong confidence in the Lord

8-10 But you, God, break out laughing; you treat the godless nations like jokes.

Strong God, I'm watching you do it. I can always count on you. God in dependable love shows up on time, shows me my enemies in ruin.

David's danger from the assassins was real and fearful. Yet, he understood that they were nothing against God. The Lord could simply **laugh** at them and their arrogant claim that God did not hear or care about their evil.

For God is my defence, "my high place, my fortress, the place of my resort in the time of my danger. If the enemy be too strong for me to cope with him, I will retreat into my home, where he cannot reach me."

Meditate on these three attributes.

- He is the God of your mercy, from Him pure mercy flows, and nothing but mercy;
- He is your High Tower, whom you may put between yourself and your enemy,

Notes:

- He is your Strength, not that you receive strength from Him, but that you appropriate Him as your strength.”

V 11- 13, David asks the Lord to defeat his enemy

11-13 Don't make quick work of them, God, lest my people forget.

Bring them down in slow motion, take them apart piece by piece.

Let all their mean-mouthed arrogance catch up with them, Catch them out and bring them down

—every muttered curse

—every barefaced lie.

Finish them off in fine style! Finish them off for good!

Then all the world will see that God rules well in Jacob, everywhere that God's in charge.

Selah

David not just wants his enemies to be defeated but he wants them to be defeated in a way that would do good for God's people – to scatter them instead of killing them straightaway so that the lesson would last long.

Let them know that God rules in Jacob to the ends of the earth: These words are similar to those that David utters to Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:46, not long before Saul sends his assassins after David. He understands that these enemies are very much Goliath-like.

V 14-15, The presence of Danger

They return when the sun goes down, They howl like coyotes, ringing the city.

They scavenge for bones, And bite the hand that feeds them.

David, peeking through a window at the assassins surrounding his house, sees them for a pack of dangerous dogs, and hence repeats these lines.

Notes:

He watches them wander the streets around his house like hungry dogs hunting for food.

V 16-17, Singing praises to God despite the looming danger

*16-17 And me? I'm singing your prowess, shouting at cockcrow your largesse,
For you've been a safe place for me, a good place to hide.*

*Strong God, I'm watching you do it, I can always count on you—
God, my dependable love.*

The street is filled with murdering dogs howling, yet David sings of God's power and mercy.

They wait for him in the evening, but David was confident that, with God as his defence and refuge, he would survive until morning, and survive singing.

With people of all cadres from the highest to the lowest conspiring to kill him, ***David's heart was yet filled with songs of praise instead of dark fears.*** He started the Psalm asking God for His defence (Psalm 59:1), and at the end of it, he was confident that God was his defence and that could sing about it.

When King Saul sent assassins to David's house, he openly revealed his desire to kill David. From then on, for the next 13 years, David had to live as a fugitive, constantly in danger of his life.

Please do note that David entered that period singing praises, and was still able to sing praise to God at the end of it.

Apostle Paul

Acts 23:11-24,

Apostle Paul was taken as a prisoner and people were waiting to ambush him on his way to Jerusalem.

Acts 23:12-13, ¹²And when it was day, some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink

Notes:

till they had killed Paul. ¹³ Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy.

Yet Paul was quite happy and content. Why?

You will find the key verse in **Acts 23:11**, *But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."*

We will face many such circumstances but how do we respond?

Application

How would you respond when you had got someone a job in your company and the very person you had helped is trying to get you out and working against you?

Will you be able to sing a song of praise?

We have seen from the life of John and Betty Stam that they were not rescued from the danger they faced. They lost their life for sake of the Gospel. How would you respond when God doesn't answer and you are forced to lose money, name, job, etc... what would be your reaction?

Saul was King of Israel because of David, for if not for David, he would have lost his kingdom to the Philistines; yet, Saul turned against David.

Are you being thankful for the people who have helped you?

Are you being thankful to God for the people that He has placed in your life?

Enemy is real, threat is real, you can see it with your eyes; yet, will you make the Lord God your fortress and your defence?

Notes:

The Martyrdom of John and Betty Stam

by Gordon Dunn

First published in East Asia's Millions, November/December 1984, as "For the Stams No Deliverance"

It was a bleak December day in brick-walled Tsingteh [today spelled Jingde] in South Anhwei, China, when rumors began to sift through of a possible bandit attack on the city. Farther to the south the muddied waters of the mighty Yangtze rolled through Wuhu, past Nanking, Chenkiang and Kiangyin to stain the blue waters of the Pacific. But no echo of the world's commerce ruffled the secluded city of Tsingteh this day in 1934. Hidden like a jewel in the heart of rugged natural beauty, Tsingteh was accessible to the outside world only by stone paths cut through the mountains.

John and Betty Stam were not the first missionaries to find their way to this isolated community of people, but they were the first to settle there as a family. Their first child, new born Helen Priscilla – beautiful with blue eyes, innocent face, and curly hair – gladdened the hearts of the young couple. A rented shopfront on a stone-flagged street served as their home and preaching chapel as well.

John had already demonstrated remarkable facility in speaking Chinese. Fresh from language school in Anking he had attended a spiritual life conference led by Dr. James Graham for Chinese believers. Listening intently, John took careful notes. Immediately afterwards, with surprising effectiveness, the new missionary reproduced these messages in Chinese at a summer conference in nearby Sucheng. Now, however, he was married and wholly on his own for the first time on the mission field.

"Do you think we should leave, John?" wondered Betty as she bathed the baby that morning, little realizing that it would be the last time she would do so.

"We'll wait and see," replied John.

The stories were contradictory and confusing, the rumors wild and unconfirmable. No one knew the truth. In the end the authorities were caught off guard. As the bandit horde piled into the city through the unguarded East

Notes:

Gate, the magistrate and his train barely escaped through the West Gate. By this time it was, of course, too late for John and Betty even to think of fleeing. Better stay and weather the storm, they decided.

But this storm was different from any Tsingteh had ever seen before. Wildly cheering, the bandits at last broke through the Stams' front door. Urging them to sit down, John served the uninvited guests tea. But such courtesies were lost on the outlaws, who were out to avenge themselves on a thankless society, and John and Betty were ordered to get ready to leave.

Although the Stams had been in Tsingteh only a short time, many friends watched silently and helplessly from doorway and roadside as the young foreign couple, stripped of their outer garments, were paraded down the street. John's hands were tightly tied behind his back. Betty, on horseback, held baby Priscilla. No one who saw them dared to lift a finger to help, for the city was in the grip of lawless terror. Wealthy people, landlords, stragglers among government officials and others were also taken captive. The communist bandits, perhaps fearing a counter-attack, urgently herded their "enemies of the people" along the stone-slab road that led to Miaoshou, some twelve miles west of the city.

John's arms were probably unbound as the little family was thrust into a mud hut to spend the night, for in those first hours of captivity John wrote a letter to the China Inland Mission leaders. It said, in substance:

"My wife, baby and myself are today in the hands of communist bandits. Whether we will be released or not no one knows. May God be magnified in our bodies, whether by life or by death. Philippians 1:20"

And probably sometime during that night of prayer and suspense Betty tucked provision into her little daughter's snuggle bunny (hooded sleeping bag) and bundled her into the pile of heavy winter bedding.

But what made the little baby sleep for 27 hours without a cry, a silence that saved her? What happened to the parents when the sun broke over the beautiful tree-covered hillside that December morning? These are questions we still ask. If there were eyewitnesses, we do not have their testimony.

We do know that the bandits moved on to fresh violence. We know that a courageous Christian, Mr. Lo, something of a lay evangelist, followed the trail

Notes:

as soon as he dared. It was he who found the bodies of John and Betty Stam and, at the risk of being discovered by lingering bandits, obtained coffins and sealed the bodies inside. The danger was by no means over – the times were so chaotic, in fact, that the coffins lay there for 40 days in the long grass of the Miaoshou hillside before even government help could be secured to bring them out for burial.

Having cared for the dead, Lo looked for the baby. He presumed she had been ruthlessly killed too – or kidnapped. At any rate there was no sign of the little foreign baby. Quite by accident he eventually discovered her, still sleeping in the little hut, content and carefree, unaware that the sword had made her an orphan for life. But after her long fast she was hungry – that she knew.

In the baby's clothing, Lo found the ten-dollar bill, miraculously still where it was placed in faith and love by a tender mother, doubtless with the prayer that it might save her little one's life. That it did. Wonderfully, Lactogen – milk powder of a special brand and a rare commodity in those parts – was found. And the one person in the area who knew the proper formula was Lo's wife. So when Helen Priscilla arrived at the mission compound in Wuhu, carried there in a coolie's vegetable basket, she was puzzled, perhaps, but in good spirits and in good health.

When the coffins were finally delivered to the missionary hospital in Wuhu, the heavy coffin lids were lifted to reveal the bodies, lying on their backs, modestly clothed in their underwear, just as they had trod the streets of Tsingteh a month and a half before. Each casket contained probably one hundred pounds of lime. The bodies, wrapped in clean, white cotton sheeting, were preserved in good condition. Apart from deep rope bruises on John's wrists, there was no evidence of mutilation or abuse.

John's straight, aquiline nose and jutting chin were tilted in his customary posture of candor and open friendliness. His lips were parted in an expectant smile. One could easily believe that when the dagger struck, tearing a savage hold in the front of his throat, that he saw beyond his assassin to the angel hosts at the portals of heaven. Certainly there was no sign of fear or terror, leading us to conclude that the attack was sudden, and death almost immediate. What courage it must have taken for Lo to make even unskilled attempts to stitch up the torn throat to make it more respectable!

Notes:

With Betty it was somewhat different. On her face serenity was blended with terror and consternation. Obviously she had witnessed what happened to her husband. But in the same split second a heavy sword swung across her neck from behind, almost severing head from body. Even here Lo had succeeded in sewing the head back on again so that it appeared almost natural. What struck each of us who saw the bodies and what made the sight unforgettable was the underlying look of quiet peace and expectancy on the faces of the two martyrs.

Their bodies lie buried in a little Christian cemetery on a quiet hillside in the rice-bowl city of Wuhu. There they await an Easter deliverance that was denied them on earth. The handful of China Inland Mission missionaries and local Christians at the simple burial service took comfort in God's assurance, "My ways are not your ways; neither are your ways My ways." But more than one was heard to say, "Why were the Stams, with all their gifts, taken at the very beginning of their missionary career? And why was I left?"

Only God has the answer.

Notes:

Notes:

Notes:

4. When people give false witness against you and those who have helped you in trouble because of you

Psalm 52

Circumstances: When Doeg, an Edomite, bears false witness against David and the priest Nob who gave them the showbread and the sword that he used to kill Goliath, Saul sends Doeg to kill the priests and others at the tabernacle, killing 85 in total. When David hears about the killing of the priest, he sings Psalm 52.

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 21:1-9 & 22:6-23

V 1-4, A man who lies and loves to do evil

*Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man?
The goodness of God endures continually.
2 Your tongue devises destruction,
Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.
3 You love evil more than good,
Lying rather than speaking righteousness.*

Selah

*4 You love all devouring words,
You deceitful tongue.*

Doeg the Edomite brought the evil report to King Saul and David hears about it and thinks about their wicked ways. He thought not only of the report itself, but also in the boast and joy Doeg took in delivering the message.

Notes:

Doeg murdered 85 civilians, mostly priests who were not trained for battle – hardly the work of a true mighty man. “A mighty man indeed to kill men who never touched a sword! He ought to have been ashamed of his cowardice.”

V 5, Heaven’s response

*5 God shall likewise destroy you forever;
He shall take you away, and pluck you out of your dwelling place,
And uproot you from the land of the living.*

Selah

Doeg and his kind would be destroyed forever. He will not always allow this kind of destructive lie to rule the day.

David used four vivid images of judgment against wicked men like Doeg.

- The wicked will be demolished (*destroy you*)
- The wicked will be snatched up like a coal from a fire (*take you away*)
- The wicked will have their abode taken away (*pluck you out of your dwelling place*)
- The wicked will be uprooted like a tree (*uproot you*)

V 6-7, General response

*6 The righteous also shall see and fear,
And shall laugh at him, saying,
7 “Here is the man who did not make God his strength,
But trusted in the abundance of his riches,
And strengthened himself in his wickedness.”*

When the coming judgment against Doeg happens, the people of God will notice it and it will cause them to honour and revere God.

Notes:

People often are drawn to evil and lying because they fail to trust that God can and will work through goodness and truth. They lie to themselves, saying that they need to cut corners, work this evil, or promote this lie because it's the only way to get things done.

“Wealth and wickedness are dreadful companions; when combined they make a monster”

V 8-9 David's response

8 But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God;

I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever.

9 I will praise You forever,

Because You have done it;

And in the presence of Your saints

I will wait on Your name, for it is good.

“David was in the house of God, while they were in the world; he was as a fruitful olive-tree, while they were as barren, unprofitable wood. He was to be daily more and more strengthened, established, settled, and increased. They were to be cast down, broken, swept away, and extirpated and all this because he had trusted in the mercy of God, while they in the abundance of their riches.”

Let the mighty ones boast, we will wait on the Lord; and if their haste brings them present honour, our patience will have its turn by and by, and bring us the honour which is excellent.”

Notes:

Summary

He concludes the psalm with thanksgiving, and acknowledgement which he makes of the fact that this had been the work of God.

David declares that it was entirely owing to the divine protection that he had escaped from the treachery of Doeg, and from all his subsequent dangers, and promises to retain a grateful sense of it throughout the whole of his life.

David speaks of hope mixed with gratitude. For him to wait upon the Lord patiently is expecting His mercy even when it was least appearing.

He encourages himself in the belief that his hope will not be vain, by reflecting that the name of God is good.

Life of Stephen

Acts 6:11-15, Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." ¹² And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council. ¹³ They also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; ¹⁴ for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us." ¹⁵ And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.

People conspire against Stephen and bear false witness to murder him. There could be such times in our lives as well, but how do we respond?

Notes:

Application

Do you see the hand of God in everything that happens around you?

But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in Gods unfailing love for ever and ever. (Psalm 52:8)



David, using the metaphor of an olive tree, describes himself in the House of the Lord (V8), whereas the enemies are like a plant that will be completely uprooted (V5). While the enemy will be uprooted and destroyed, David's roots are like a well-watered olive tree, fruitful and abundant.

David is highlighting something about the olive tree here. Probably, the main thing he wants to show here is the continual, almost eternal life of an olive tree. They are like weeds and will continue to grow for hundreds of years. According to radiocarbon dating, an olive tree in Algarve, Portugal, is 2000 years old. In fact, there are many 2000-year-old trees, including many in Israel and Galilee today that are nearly 3000 years old and still continue to produce fruit!

David is particularly mindful of the fruitfulness of the olive tree. The trees provide abundant fruit which can be eaten, but more often pressed and used

Notes:

for cooking oil, lamp oil, and even oil for skin. David is like an olive tree which is practically eternal, so well rooted that nothing can possibly harm him. He will continue to grow and prosper since he is planted in the most ideal place possible, near the sanctuary of the Lord.

Where are you planted?

John 15:5, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

Are you drawing your every need - physical, spiritual, emotional - from Christ, to whom you have been joined as branches?

Like David, when we go through such difficulties, do we take time to focus upon God?

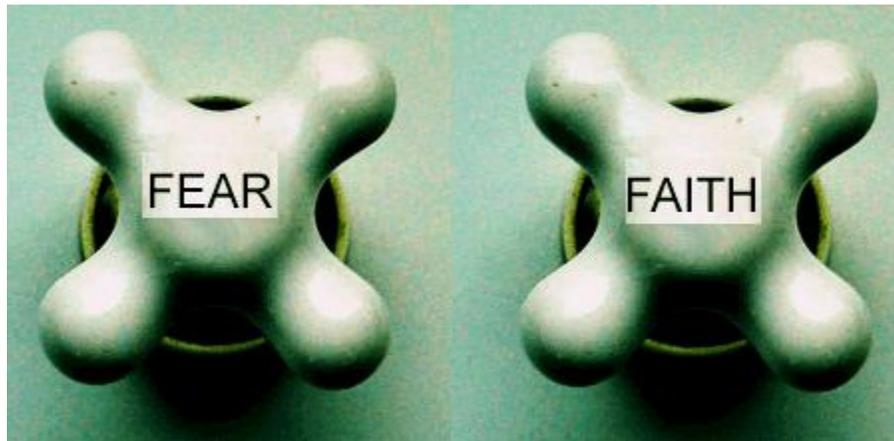
Notes:

5. When you are in trouble even the enemies don't want you ... when you feel all is against you

Psalm 56

Circumstances: David, who through fear of Saul, escapes down into the Philistine territory of Gath, carrying Goliath's old sword. It seems because through a new fear of the king of Gath, he sinks to the very bottom and starts dribbling down his beard in a desperate attempt to stop being recognised.

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 21:10-15 & 29: 1-5



Exhibiting Fear and Faith in the Face of Constant Danger:

V 1-2, Looking to God for Mercy

*1-4 Take my side, God—I'm getting kicked around, stomped on every day.
Not a day goes by but somebody beats me up;
They make it their duty to beat me up.*

David was in constant danger from servants of Saul and the Philistine enemies. Knowing fully well no human can help him, he sought God alone. He is asking God not what he deserves but according to His divine mercies.

Notes:

Ever been pounded by a wave while you are in the ocean, and as you struggle to catch your breath, you get pounded by the next wave again? Well, that's what this psalm is like as David wavers between fear and faith.

In verses 1-2 above, we see the first wave. As David contemplates the situation and the people that desire to take his life, fear begins to rise and a cloud of uncertainty circles his head.

David does not raise his complaint or concern but pours out his heart directly. What I really like about it is that he has been very direct and open and role playing before God.

V 3-4, Afraid NOT afraid

*When I get really afraid I come to you in trust.
I'm proud to praise God; fearless now, I trust in God.
What can mere mortals do?*

The fearless young man who once killed the lion and the bear with his bare hands, who killed the Philistine giant Goliath, and was a successful young captain in Israel's army does not deny the presence of fear.

There were times when he was **afraid**.

Yet, he knew what to do with that fear - just too boldly proclaim His **trust in** God despite the fear.

He feared, but that fear did not fill the whole area of his mind. He adds, 'I will trust in thee.' It is possible, then, for fear and faith to occupy the mind at the same moment.

Like coming up for air after the wave has hit, David again remembers the Lord and his position of security in Him. And in doing so, faith rises in his heart. Notice also that fear and faith exist together in the above verse.

Notes:



That is the way it generally is in real life. Everything depends upon where you are looking.

We say we trust God, but how do we confidently know anything about God? We know Him through His Word, through His revelation to us.

God Spoke to David through His prophet Samuel that David will be king over Israel (1 Samuel 16:1-13). Here David was specifically thinking about the promise made by God to him.

When all we could hear or think of is bodily harm by fellow humans, here David affirmingly asks himself what man can do to him.

V 5-7, Constant danger

*⁵⁻⁶ They don't let up— they smear my reputation
and huddle to plot my collapse.*

*They gang up, sneak together through the alleys
To take me by surprise, wait their chance to get me.*

⁷ Pay them back in evil! Get angry, God! Down with these people!

'What can mortal man do to me' was David's declaration at the end of verse 4. But in verses 5-7, we see the next wave of doubt break over him as he again focuses 'on the things that are seen' - something believers are specifically told not to do! (2 Corinthians 4:18)

The attacks against David were not only violent, they were also deceitful, with twisting and misrepresentation of his words and intentions.

Their attack was constant, David mentions it all day long in verses 1 and 2 and again in verse 5.

The ungodly people only twist your words in their warfare.

Notes:

Now, you are probably not being chased by a spear-throwing mad king. But are there some other circumstances that you have been fearful or worried about?

David appeals to God for justice and feels it is not right that wicked people triumph over him, be it Saul's men or Philistines; all he wanted was God to cast them down.

Gods Care for David

V8-9, God knew David's troubles

*⁸You've kept track of my every toss and turn through the sleepless nights,
Each tear entered in your ledger, each ache written in your book.*

*⁹If my enemies run away, turn tail when I yell at them,
Then I'll know that God is on my side.*



In the midst of doubt and uncertainty, David knew one thing for certain that God is for him. He may not know about the many things happening around him, but he could boldly say that 'God is for me'!

In such circumstances, if he were asked when he would become king of Israel, he may have said 'I don't know.'

Notes:

But he would have continued, “one thing I know for sure is that God is for me, and if God is for me then He will make a way for me and that is all I need to know.”

David was all alone in this situation, yet he valued the sympathy and care of God all the more, and he found great comfort in the thought that God noted his misery.

David’s wanderings and tears did not mean that God was against him. Instead, he knew that God was for him, and would answer his prayer for rescue.

Apostle Paul made the same statement: “when God is for me who can be against me?”

Can you say that God is for you right here, right now?

Do you know this very thing of His presence?

And not just in your head, but can you also stand on it when it doesn’t seem (from outward circumstances) to be true?

‘I may not know much more’, David would have said, ‘but I do know that He is for me. And I will rest in that!’

V 10-11, Confidence in God declared

10-11 I’m proud to praise God, proud to praise GOD. Fearless now, I trust in God; what can mere mortals do to me?

For the third time in this Psalm, David declared the greatness of God’s Word. This was how he knew that God was for him. It wasn’t just a wish, a dream, or a hope. It was well grounded because God said it in His word.

There is no more going ‘down’ for David now!

Once again he

- Remembers the word of God
- The promises of God
- The faithfulness of God.

Notes:

In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me: David repeated this phrase again, preaching confidence to himself?

Because of the word of God, it was confirmed that God was for him.

When news came to Luther, that both emperor and pope had threatened his ruin, he bravely answered, I care for neither of them, I know whom I have trusted.

No more pleading of God to intervene. Now David would rather give something back to God. What God truly desires - and one of the best gifts we can give him - is an offering of 'thanks'.

David got to this point in the midst of his difficulties. It is easy to sing in the day, when everything is going sweet, but this is a song of praise in the night - based on little more than faith and trust in the character of God. But quite enough. It is a very acceptable sacrifice in the sight of God.

V12-13, Fulfilling the vow

12-13 God, you did everything you promised, and I'm thanking you with all my heart. You pulled me from the brink of death, my feet from the cliff-edge of doom. Now I stroll at leisure with God in the sunlit fields of life.

David referred to the sacrifice he would offer for the deliverance he knew God would bring. He was a long distance from God's altar so the sacrifice could not yet be made. But in David's heart, it was already done, as was the anticipated rescue.

He was so sure and certain the deliverance will come from God, so now his thoughts are busy in preparing his sacrifice of thanks before it had actually happened.

Thank offerings can be a term for literal sacrifices (Leviticus 7:12) and for songs of gratitude (Psalm 26:7).

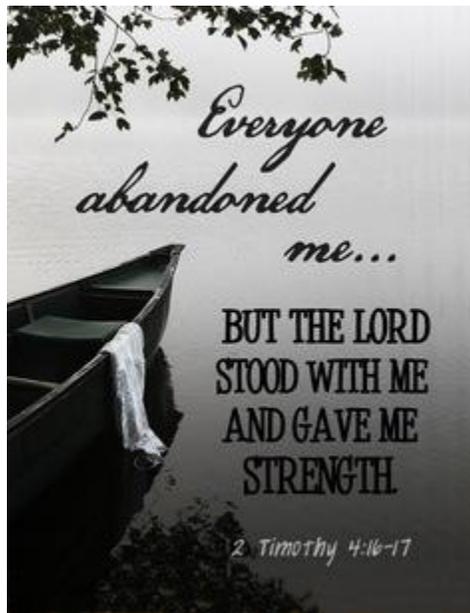
On his way to Gath, in Gath, and on his way from Gath, David's life was in constant danger. God and God alone delivered his life from his enemies, and kept his feet from falling.

Notes:

David knew that this was why God spared his life. It wasn't so that David could do his own thing or live unto himself. It was so that he could live rightly before God.

The Life of Apostle Paul

*2 Timothy 4:16-17, At my first defense **no one stood with me, but all forsook me.** May it not be charged against them.¹⁷ **But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me,** so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.*



Apostle Paul had so many co-workers, yet when it came to defending him there was no one. But Paul did not look for anyone but God.

Paul could draw strength and encouragement from God alone, not from anyone else. His focus was on God always.

Notes:

Application

God's promise today

Hebrews 13:6, "So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

The promise that David relied on, seeing the rescue of God in his life, is also the promise given to us. Letter to the Hebrews quoted this very psalm for us to understand what kind of a helper God is for us.

Therefore, the message of Psalm 56 is certainly applicable to our lives.

How does trusting in God remove fear in your life?

God's Word is our source of confidence

Repeatedly, David states that he will praise the word of the Lord. When we are attacked, we need to be able to draw on the stable assurance of God's word rather than the ever changing perspectives of public opinion.

A lack of knowledge of the scriptures is crippling to the Christian.

Today, too many people have too much of their faith based solely on emotions and feelings. But our emotions can rapidly change. When we are under attack, it is our emotions that fail and our feelings that become a rollercoaster ride. It is when we are under attack and our emotions are distressed that we need to be able to know and rely only on God's word.

God's Word put our minds on a spiritual plain

Things are the most difficult when we keep our focus on the problems of this world and lose sight of our heavenly purpose.

Trusting God means that I am going to look for God's help and will be reminded that God is in charge of the big picture.

There are times when we are suffering or under attack that we do not think that we can endure another day. However, God has always offered relief for the moment to help us get out and continue to press forward.

Notes:

God's Word reminds us that God is for us

Despite all that David went through in his life, he returned to this theme:

“If God is for us, who can be against us?”

When God is on our side, it is possible to find a refuge in the midst of the storm.

Our relationship with God has greater value than simply trying to stop the present suffering. We are able to surrender ourselves to God's control and allow the Creator to help us through our difficulties. This is the picture of the apostles who would experience tremendous suffering, yet were able to count these things as joy for the cause of Christ.

As Christians, we are called to experience suffering. But suffering does not equal abandonment from God. There is a trust of ultimate justice in the end as well as a reward for our obedience to the Lord. It is in these things that we are able to remove fear in dire times.

Notes:

Notes:

6. When you are in trouble even the enemies don't want you... just when you have escaped from an enemy and are on the hiding

Psalm 34

Circumstances: A fugitive from Saul, David goes to the Philistine city of Gath but finds no refuge there and narrowly escapes. Following that, David goes to the Cave of Adullam where many desperate men join him. This joyful and wise Psalm seems to have been written from that cave and sung in the presence of those men.

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 21:10-22:1

V 1-3, Overflowing Praise

*I will bless the Lord at all times;
His praise shall continually be in my mouth.
2 My soul shall make its boast in the Lord;
The humble shall hear of it and be glad.
3 Oh, magnify the Lord with me,
And let us exalt His name together.*

David may have acted like a fool, but he was wise enough to praise the Lord, who was his only true wisdom. Physically, David was hiding in the cave, but spiritually, in a true sense, he was hiding in the Lord.

The praises of God not just in his heart but from his mouth too.

David cleverly wins his freedom by pretending madness from the Philistines, but knows that the working of the thing was due to God, not his own cleverness. He had to humiliate himself like a madman to escape the Philistines, whom he had foolishly sought refuge among, even bringing Goliath's sword with him to Gath!

Notes:

What intrigues me in this passage is that David proclaims that he will praise the Lord **AT ALL TIMES**

V 4-7, Testimony of David's deliverance

4 I sought the Lord, and He heard me,

And delivered me from all my fears.

5 They looked to Him and were radiant,

And their faces were not ashamed.

6 This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard him,

And saved him out of all his troubles.

7 The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him,

And delivers them.

When we study this Psalm, we have the information behind the circumstances in the life of David. What we see clearly is that there was no attempt made by David to conceal his failure. Rather, this psalm should be interpreted in the light of the failures of David. He never attempted to look good!

The more we think upon our Lord, the less we look upon ourselves. Looking to our Lord, who is seated upon the right hand of the throne of God, will keep our heads, and especially our hearts, steady when going through deep waters of affliction.

David also knew that God would never forsake the one who trusts in Him. God would give them confidence in the moment and vindication in time.

Acting the madman among the Philistines, David certainly was the poor man. As a poor man, David cried out to God, and God graciously answered.

- A cry is short, and not sweet.
- A cry is brief, and bitter.
- A cry is the language of pain.
- A cry is a natural production.
- A cry has much meaning and no music.

Notes:

It is for people who find themselves at the absolute low point in life, which is where David was.

Or find themselves between a rock, which in this case was King Saul, and a hard place, which was King Achish. It is for you when everything seems against you.”



V 8-10, An Encouragement to taste God's Provision and Protection

8 Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good;

Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

9 Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints!

There is no want to those who fear Him.

10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger;

But those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing.

Answer the following two questions, then you will understand the two verses.

1. Who is David inviting to share his blessings with?
2. What are the blessings that are to be enjoyed with him?

After telling of his own experience, David challenges us through this Psalm to experience God's goodness for ourselves. It could only come through a personal encounter, in some ways similar to a taste or to sight.

Notes:

VISION - PROVISION

“If you have a vision, God will make a Provision”



David also challenges those who were with him to experience the same.

To fear the Lord was much like trusting Him and experiencing His goodness to David. This fear is the proper reverence and respect that man has for Deity. If you really experience God’s goodness, if you really experience the blessedness of trusting Him, you will also have an appropriate fear of the Lord.

David experienced a good thing from God in his deliverance among the Philistines. He knew it was a good thing not due to his own strength or might; it was the goodness of God extended to those who seek the Lord.

V 11- 22, Instruction to Fear the Lord

From verse 11, David starts preaching to the people about fearing God. The style of the Psalm completely changes.

After David’s deliverance through feigned madness among the Philistines, many who were in distress, in debt, or in discontent gathered to him at the Cave of Adullam. David taught these men his own recent lessons of faith, including the fear of the Lord.

Notes:

V 11-14, Live in the fear of the Lord

*11 Come, you children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.*

*12 Who is the man who desires life,
And loves many days, that he may see good?*

*13 Keep your tongue from evil,
And your lips from speaking deceit.*

*14 Depart from evil and do good;
Seek peace and pursue it.*

David describes that the fear of the Lord is rooted in action, not just religious feelings. So He teaches his men that,

- They should not speak evil
- They should avoid lies and deceit
- They stay away from evil and do good
- Peace with God and among men should be sought

V 15- 16, Under the watchful eyes of the Lord

*15 The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
And His ears are open to their cry.*

*16 The face of the Lord is against those who do evil,
To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.*

David further teaches them about the watchful eye and attentive ear of God towards His people.

V 17- 18, God the helper of the humble

*17 The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears,
And delivers them out of all their troubles.*

18 The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart,

Notes:

And saves such as have a contrite spirit.

David reminded his men at the Cave of Adullam that God is attentive and He cares for the righteous. David's testimony was that God had delivered him out of all his troubles.

David learned a lesson in the Adullam Cave that his deliverance depended upon God alone. Human genius ways did not save him, but God's grace. So David is asking his men to look to God for deliverance rather than trusting in their strength.

V 19-22, God's care for the righteous one

19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous,

But the Lord delivers him out of them all.

20 He guards all his bones;

Not one of them is broken.

21 Evil shall slay the wicked,

And those who hate the righteous shall be condemned.

22 The Lord redeems the soul of His servants,

And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.

- Verse 11 speaks of the fear of the Lord in terms of its beliefs;
- Verses 13 and 14 focus on its behaviour;
- Verses 15-18 on its basis.
- Verses 19-22: David expands verse 12 by describing the benefits of the fear of the Lord.

The fear of the Lord is described as providing the righteous with protection and deliverance from the wrath of man.

Those who fear the Lord are not only assured of God's protection in the adversities of life but are also kept from divine retribution and wrath.

Notes:

God is righteous and He deals with the wicked and cannot overlook sin. He will not allow His righteous ones to be persecuted without finally executing justice on the evil-doers who oppress them.

David knew that God not only saves men from temporal trials and tribulations but that He also saves men from their sins. The wicked will perish, but the souls of His servants are redeemed.

Apostle Paul

When Apostle Paul writes to the church in Corinth listing all the troubles he went through for the sake of the Gospel, he does not boast in his ability or talent while talking of his escape but boasts in God.

2 Corinthians 11:30-33, If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. ³¹The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. ³²In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; ³³but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

We also learn that Paul was always rejoicing - something he wants us to follow.

1 Thessalonians 5:16, Rejoice always,

Notes:

Application

How would you respond when you have got to go through a similar situation in your life?

What would come to your mind first when you are in trouble?

- Trying to justify your stand
- That you don't deserve this
- It's not your fault

Who would you call upon?

- Pastor
- Spouse
- Friend
- Children

What would be your emotional status?

- Crying
- Bitter
- Angry
- Rejoicing

Notes:

Notes:

Notes:

7. Running away for your life from one place to another place ... yet your heart longs to worship the Lord...

Psalm 63

Circumstances: Prayer in the wilderness of En Gedi. David longs to worship the Lord in the sanctuary in Jerusalem, but he cannot. Because he is in the wilderness of Judah fleeing from those seeking to kill him. His confidence is in the steadfast, covenant love of God, because it is better than life itself. David trusts the Lord to protect him from his enemies so that he will again be able to rejoice and praise the Lord in the sanctuary.

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 22:1-5; 2 Samuel 23:13; and 1 Chronicles 11:15-19

Stress/pressure is one of the main reasons for all the problems we face in this world:

- As a child you feel the pressure to please your parents/be the best student
- At high school, you feel the pressure to score to get into a good university
- At university, you are under so much pressure to complete the degree
- Completing education, you are under pressure for to find a good job
- Followed by the pressure to find the right mate
- Once married, then comes the pressure to raise your social status - car, house, etc
- The pressure to have children
- Then, the cycle starts all over again

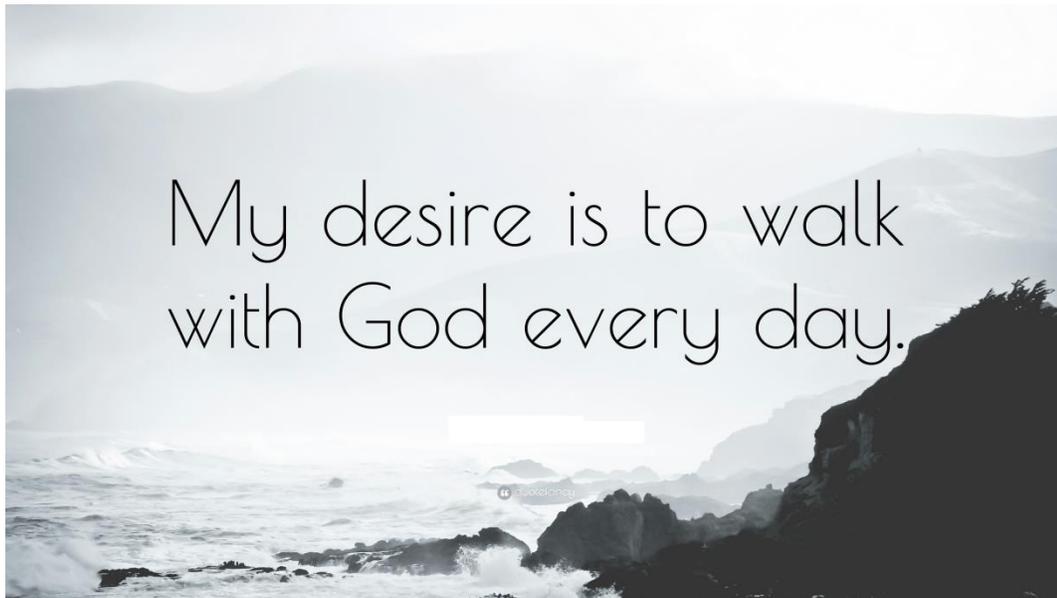
In David's case, he is under tremendous pressure for his life.

Notes:

Yet, David expresses longing for God's presence, praise, joy, fellowship with God, confidence in God's salvation. But there is not a word asking for physical or even spiritual blessings.

V 1-4, My Desire is God

*O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You;
My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water.
2 So I have looked for You in the sanctuary,
To see Your power and Your glory.
3 Because Your loving kindness is better than life,
My lips shall praise You.
4 Thus I will bless You while I live;
I will lift up my hands in Your name.*



David knew God in an intimate and personal way. There is a huge difference between knowing about a person and actually knowing that person.

Notes:

You can learn a lot about your favourite person. You can read news articles and books on that person's life. You can learn all about their personality, personal habits, and family life. But it is still not the same as knowing that person personally.

You come to know God when you turn from your sin to God and trust in Jesus Christ and His death on your behalf. He gives you eternal life as His free gift.

And then one must develop their relationship by spending time with the new Friend through the weeks and months and years in a variety of situations. "Seeking after God" means that you are seeking to develop an intimate relationship with the God whom you have met personally through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

As for David, seeking Him was the priority of the day. The thirst of David's soul demanded to be satisfied early in the day.

David sought God at the tabernacle as earnestly as a thirsty man looking for water in a dry and thirsty land. David was running around in the wilderness of Judah, largely desert, hence he could easily make this analogy.

While singing this psalm, David was in the wilderness, not in the tabernacle; yet, he knew that the presence of God will reveal His power and glory. This shows no matter where you are spiritually, you can be in the presence of God.

V 5-8, My Delight is God

5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness,

And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.

6 When I remember You on my bed,

I meditate on You in the night watches.

7 Because You have been my help,

Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice.

8 My soul follows close behind You;

Your right hand upholds me.

Notes:

David regarded God's great love as natural, while people regard life as natural. David enjoyed God's love, while people enjoyed life. David would despair without the sense of God's love, while people would despair without the sense of life.

David thought that there were not enough hours in the day to think upon God's greatness and goodness. Therefore, he also used the night watches to meditate upon God.

Many of David's psalms are cries for help from God. David should have again cried for help since he is still in the wilderness of Judah; yet, he does not cry for help. Rather, David chooses to give thanks and praise for God's faithfulness in other times.

David's soul was close to God, following Him as one following a Master or Teacher. God responded with care and strength for David, upholding him with His mighty right hand.

V 9-11, My Defence is God

9 But those who seek my life, to destroy it,

Shall go into the lower parts of the earth.

10 They shall fall by the sword;

They shall be a portion for jackals.

11 But the king shall rejoice in God;

Everyone who swears by Him shall glory;

But the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped

Even though David is close to God, yet his problems remain still. The people who wanted to kill him still at large and pursuing him.

David trusted God to deal with his enemies, especially with King Saul. In God's time and in God's way, He dealt with Saul - remember how Saul was killed just falling into his own sword.

Notes:

Conclusion

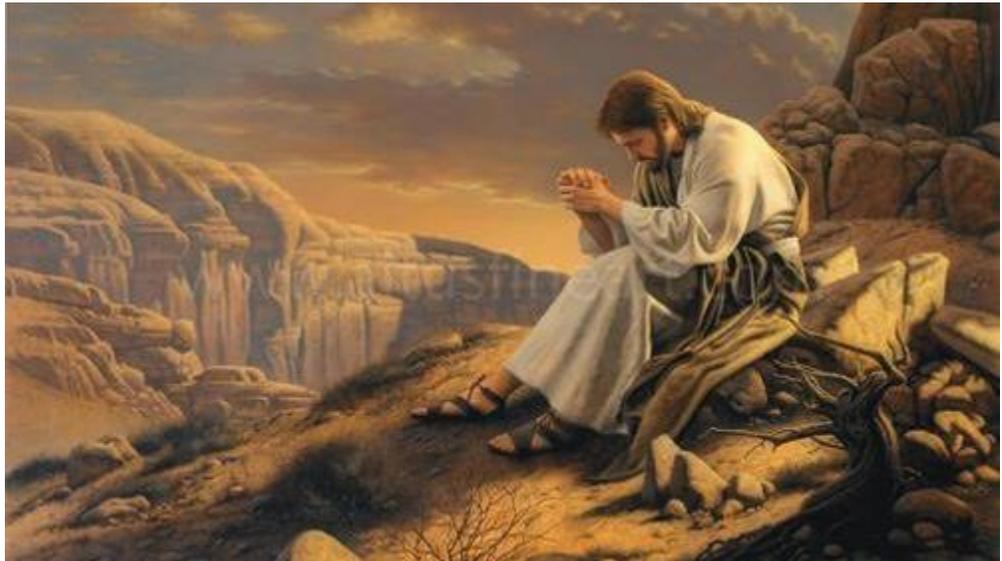
Relationship must be established: *O God, You are my God*

Fellowship must be cultivated: *Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You*

Jesus Christ

Jesus always took time be with God alone and His focus was God.

Mark 1:35, And early in the morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there.



Mark 6:45-46, And immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the multitude away. And after bidding them farewell, he departed to the mountain to pray.

Notes:

Apostle Paul

Paul always mentions of his desires to know God more.

While writing a letter to the church in Philippi, Paul states his personal qualifications and finishes the letter by declaring and counting them all as rubbish when considering the knowledge of God.

Philippians 3:7-8, ⁷ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.

Application

Does my schedule reflect that seeking God is my first priority?

Pressure is what reveals your true priorities. When the pressure is on, everything but the essential gets set aside.

How can we make time alone with God a priority?

How can a Christian who has lost the passion for God regain it?

Is God your true desire? Is God your true delight?

Notes:

8. You help a person who is in trouble but he turns around to betray you...

Psalm 36

Circumstances:

This is what David was thinking when he found out that the people of Keilah betrayed him.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 23:12

V 1-4, The character of a wicked man

1 Sin whispers to the wicked, deep within their hearts.

They have no fear of God at all.

2 In their blind conceit,

they cannot see how wicked they really are.

3 Everything they say is crooked and deceitful.

They refuse to act wisely or do good.

4 They lie awake at night, hatching sinful plots.

Their actions are never good.

They make no attempt to turn from evil.

- No fear of God
- He calls evil good
- He refuses to turn back but continues to do evil
- He is a hypocrite
- He is determined to do evil
- He masters himself in wickedness

Notes:

V 5-8, God's patience and mercy

*5 Your unfailing love, O Lord, is as vast as the heavens;
your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds.*

*6 Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,
Your justice like the ocean depths.*

You care for people and animals alike, O Lord.

7 How precious is your unfailing love, O God!

*All humanity finds shelter
in the shadow of your wings.*

*8 You feed them from the abundance of your own house,
letting them drink from your river of delights.*

- God is merciful to all, even to all creatures
- God is so merciful particularly to His people whom he admires
- His people can rely upon His faithfulness
- His people trust Him
- His people are satisfied
- They have access to the river of joy

V 9-12, David prays

*9 For You are the fountain of life,
the light by which we see.*

*10 Pour out your unfailing love on those who love you;
give justice to those with honest hearts.*

*11 Don't let the proud trample me
or the wicked push me around.*

*12 Look! Those who do evil have fallen!
They are thrown down, never to rise again.*

Notes:

- God is the source of light and life
- The fountain of life
- His light will shine upon God's people
- His power will change the circumstances

“Your loving kindness, O Lord, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness reaches to the skies.”

David mentions God’s loving kindness three times in this psalm in verse 5, immensity; in verse 7, its value; and in verse 10, as a prayer that the Lord will continue dispensing it.

Notes:

Notes:

9. *A word for the ones who betrayed you whom you protected*

Psalm 62

Circumstances: We have in this psalm the departing message David gives the men of Keilah. He tells them that they too should put their trust in the Lord, not in themselves or others.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 23:1-13

God's Word Translation

V 1-4, If God is your salvation and refuge, you will be at peace in the midst of threatening times!

My soul waits calmly for God alone.

My salvation comes from him.

² *He alone is my rock and my saviour—my stronghold.*

I cannot be severely shaken.

³ *How long will all of you attack a person?*

How long will you try to murder him,

as though he were a leaning wall or a sagging fence?

⁴ *They plan to force him out of his high position.*

They are happy to lie.

They bless with their mouths,

but in their hearts they curse.

Selah

Notes:

Hopefully, you'll never have anyone plotting to kill you! But if you're in any kind of leadership position, whether in the church or in business, you would have times when you're under attack. You'll be criticized and slandered.

But the Bible never promises exemption from such attacks. Rather, it shows us what to do when you're under attack.

In such times, make sure that God alone is your salvation and refuge.

Submission. When difficult things happen to us, we can either angrily complain to God, "I don't deserve such treatment!" Or, we can submit to Him. Agreeing with His promises, giving supremacy to His Word, bowing before His sovereignty, and getting rid of our tendency to grumble and murmur.

I can't think of a more remarkable demonstration of this than that of Job. When God inexplicably took his possessions, his ten children, and his health, Job humbly proclaimed (Job 1:21), "*The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.*"

While the rest of the book of Job shows how he wrestled through his pain and his complaints against God, by the end of the book we find Job again in a posture of worship, bowing before God's sovereign hand.

V 5-7, Your rest is secured in God when He is your only source of salvation

*⁵ Wait calmly for God alone, my soul,
because my hope comes from him.*

*⁶ He alone is my rock and my saviour—my stronghold.
I cannot be shaken.*

*⁷ My salvation and my glory depend on God.
God is the rock of my strength, my refuge*

David repeats the first two verses again just to reaffirm himself.

Notes:

He keeps one description after the other of who God is. After telling himself to wait in silence for God only (62:5), he adds, *“for my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be moved.”*

“I shall not be moved” at all! Then, he goes over it again (62:7), “On God my salvation and my glory rest; the rock of my strength, my refuge is in God.”

Have you noticed the mention of the possessive pronoun “my” 9 times in verses 5-7?



V 8, Teaching others to trust God

*⁸ Trust him at all times, you people.
Pour out your hearts in his presence.
God is our refuge.*

Selah

David spoke to the people since what he understood and learnt was good for him was good for others as well. As a leader of God’s people, he spoke wisdom to them, reminding them that God was worthy at all times of their trust in Him.

Notes:

V 9-12, Trust in God not in men or in riches

⁹ Common people are only a whisper in the wind.

Important people are only a delusion.

When all of them are weighed on a scale, they amount to nothing.

They are less than a whisper in the wind.

¹⁰ Do not count on extortion to make you rich.

Do not hope to gain anything through robbery.

When riches increase, do not depend on them.

¹¹ God has spoken once.

I have heard it said twice:

“Power belongs to God.

¹² Mercy belongs to you, O Lord.

You reward a person based on what he has done.”

David explained why it was necessary for them to know that they should not put their trust in man. Whether they were of high caliber or low caliber, they were all lighter than vapor.

There are three primary ways in which one may set their heart on riches.

- To take excessive pleasure in riches by making them the source of joy for life
- To place one's hope and security in riches
- To grow proud and arrogant because of riches

Instead, David wants us to understand that

- God is powerful.
- God is loving.

God will justly judge all of our enemies. If anyone opposes God's power and resists His love, he will know His justice. Satan always attacks either or both

Notes:

of these truths when we face trials. He tempts you with the thought that if God is all powerful, He could have prevented these trials. So, God is not in love with you. This is where by faith we have to join Joseph, who told his brothers who had sold him into slavery, that what they meant for evil God turned it for good.

David understood that power belongs to God and to none other. This is why David was so determined to trust in God and God alone.

Man neither helps us nor rewards us, while God does both.

Jesus Christ

In John 13, we see Jesus Christ washing the feet of His disciples including the one who is going to betray Him.

John 12:6, This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

Knowing fully well that Judas was robbing Him and was going to betray Him, Jesus chooses to wash his feet. Why and how is that possible? Because Jesus put His complete trust in God alone, not on any man!

Apostle Paul

Apostle Paul was betrayed by unknown Jews that led to his arrest in Jerusalem.

Acts 21:27, "When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him."

You will also find in *Acts 24:5-9 (NLT), We have found this man to be a troublemaker who is constantly stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the cult known as the Nazarenes. 6 Furthermore, he was trying to desecrate the Temple when we arrested him. 8 You can find out the truth of our accusations by examining him yourself." 9 Then the other Jews chimed in, declaring that everything Tertullus said was true.*

Notes:

Application

Why is it important to keep in mind that the goal is not our peace, but God's glory?

Where is the proper balance between trusting in God alone versus using plans and methods for deliverance?

How do you overcome the anxiety caused by others when they attack you?

How to keep the focus on God when everything seems to be going the other way?

Notes:

Notes:

Notes:

Devotion: Balancing Physical Life

*Ecclesiastes 7:16, Do not be overly righteous, Nor be overly wise:
Why should you destroy yourself?*

***We are not a physical being going through human experience
rather we are spiritual being going through this physical
experience.***



I am glad we are doing this study in the USA, the land on a borrowing spree, one of the most borrowed nations in the world. People heap things with the buy-now-pay-later credit scheme. Something that is a very common trend all across.

When you look into your account, you are overdrawn, called the overdraft facility. You have many credit cards, spending beyond what you can even pay back. Every year, the bank has to do an exercise called balancing the books, tallying your income, borrowing and the outstanding so that the books are in order. Likewise, you are also overdrawn emotionally, physically and spiritually. Hence, we are going to balance your physical book now!

Notes:

Firstly, what is overdrawn?

You withdraw more than you actually put in.

Let us take a brief moment and analyse our life. Ask yourself these questions?

- *Am I spending more from my **Spiritual** account than I put in?*
- *Am I spending more from my **Physical** account than I put in?*
- *Am I spending more from my **Emotional** account than I put in?*

You cannot be all things to all people and you must take time to replenish the accounts if you expect to be able to keep spending.

It doesn't mean that you will never be tired, never feel stressed or rushed or stretched, but it does mean that if you are living in that out-of-balance mode all the time, something's wrong.

- Priorities confused
- Discipline broken
- Calendar is full
- Not knowing how to stop this vicious cycle

Physical life

Romans 8:6-8, Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end; attention to God leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life. Focusing on the self is the opposite of focusing on God. Anyone completely absorbed in self ignores God, ends up thinking more about self than God. That person ignores who God is and what he is doing. And God isn't pleased at being ignored. (MSG)

So if your focus is on the physical, then you will lose focus on God and you will ignore God, which God is not certainly pleased with.

There are times when people are so heavenly focused but they are no good in physical life. This is also wrong. James puts this across so beautifully in his letter:

James 2:15-16, Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing,¹⁶ and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat

Notes:

well”—but then you don’t give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? (NLT)

When God created Adam, he was given a physical job to do.

*Genesis 2:15, Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to **tend and keep** it.*

Thus, God gave man a job. As a Christian, God expects you to excel in the job that He has given you.

Ecclesiastes 9:10, Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.

2 Corinthians 8:7, But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. (NIV)

Whether you are doing a great job or a menial one, please do it with all your might and excel in it, which is God’s expectation of you. At the same time, always remember the reason why you are excelling.

Don’t

- Pursue excellence for the sake of superiority
- Be limited by the task
- Pursue excellence with half-hearted effort

Not only that, if you don’t work or provide for your family, then you are worse than an unbeliever.

1 Timothy 5:8, But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

What do we arrive at from the above?

- That we ought to work
- That we have been commanded by the Lord

Notes:

- That we ought to excel in the work
- That we ought to provide for home

Spiritual life

Galatians 5:16, I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Walk in the spirit!

Romans 8:6, For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

To have life and peace, you ought to be spiritually minded.

Father Abraham passed through the ancient city of Jerusalem on many occasions, but there's no record of him going to the city or kissing its stones.

Hebrews 11:10, "For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

This is what Apostle Paul mentions in his letter to the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 4:18, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Physical and Spiritual

How do we combine these two?

1 Corinthians 15:46, However, ***the spiritual is not first***, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.

Jesus gives us a beautiful commandment how we ought to combine these two.

Matthew 22:37-40, Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and

Notes:

great commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Once you are a born-again believer, the first priority is the Lord and then your physical. At the same time, your physical life should show that you are spiritual.

The life of Jesus Christ demonstrates us the perfect balance between the natural and spiritual. Jesus, the very Son of God, who being in the form of God, was born as a little baby to his mother Mary. He lived as a normal little boy and grew up to manhood.

He worked in his father's carpenter's shop to earn a living. When he started his ministry, he began to display incredible supernatural powers and astonishing spiritual insight. Yet, he walked in the hot sun, got hungry and tired. He spent most of his ministry just helping people, teaching them, healing their diseases, and on some occasions providing miraculous food for them. But never used the power to feed or satisfy His own physical needs.

Jesus was the perfect blend of the natural and spiritual.

1 Peter 2:21, For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

We are commanded to imitate His earthly pattern.

It is interesting that as Jesus was dying on the cross, and as he was accomplishing an eternal redemption for all mankind, He took time out to give specific instructions on the care of his mother. We learn from this that there is no spiritual matter on earth that cannot be interrupted by the natural needs of humankind. These "interruptions" may be just as important as that great spiritual work that we think we are accomplishing.

What would drain our strength?

Our strength is used up when we try to do more than we can do.

Notes:

God has not called us to be all things to all people. Jesus was careful where He went to minister. He didn't try to go to every city. He didn't heal every sick person. He didn't preach to everyone on the face of the earth. Yet, He could say at the end of a very short three-year ministry that He had accomplished what His father had sent Him to do.

Are you trying to prove something to yourself by being all things to all people?

Maybe you have a hard time saying "No." Whatever that is that causes you and I to over-commit, we need to get this area under control.

Our strength is used up when we have too much stuff. Did you know that the more you have, the more energy it takes out of you? Have you cleaned your closet out lately?

A home or apartment full of valued "treasures" is a real drainer of energy. Now I'm not suggesting we can't have things that we enjoy, but the question is, do you enjoy them or are they just sapping your time and energy?

Our strength is used up when we have money problems. Credit cards can be our downfall. Maybe some of you need to get on a budget and stop this drain on our lives. I don't use my credit card unless I can pay them back fully in the same month. Be it credit card or debit card, don't spend when you don't have.

Our strength is used up when our lives are not disciplined. Proverbs says that we die from lack of discipline, and I believe with all my heart that many of us are drained of energy because we refuse the needed discipline in our lives.

Let us see how we can balance it.

1. The Word of God

Psalms 119:28, My soul melts from heaviness; Strengthen me according to Your word.

The Word of God is our resource to get us through times of weariness and sorrow.

Notes:

John 15:7, If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

The above verse is the real blank cheque that the Lord has given us. Whatever the amount, you can bank it on any time.

How much of time do you spend to read the Word of God every day?

Do you hunger and thirst after His Word?

Remember, your life will always be out of balance until you have a steady diet of the Bible in your life. Feast on His words every day and on every occasion.

2. *The Joy of the Lord*

Nehemiah 8:10, *Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.*

Joy implies contentment, peace and fulfilment. It is important to remind ourselves that joy is not synonymous with happiness. Happiness comes through our circumstances. Sometimes you will be happy and other times sad depending on the news you receive.

But joy is that deeper, abiding sense of completeness that is present even when circumstances are not happy or enjoyable.

Proverbs 17:22, *A joyful heart is good medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones.*

David prayed, "*Restore to me the joy of my salvation.*" When we've sinned and are out of fellowship with the Lord, we lose our joy and that really drains our account.

3. *Fellowship with fellow believers*

Acts 2:42, *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

Living and working with those who do not share our faith and our love of Jesus will drain on our inner resources. We need times of fellowship to give us

Notes:

strength. We need church every week. We need small support groups of Bible study and prayer.

I personally encourage/recommend small care groups or home groups at yours or at a fellow brother/sister's on a regular basis. You need a few people that you can regularly interact with, where you can be open and honest, where you are accountable, and where you are totally accepted - people you can call in the middle of the night, if necessary, for prayer support. If you have one or two people like that in your life, it will pour enormous strength into you, spiritually, emotionally and mentally.

Notes:

10. *You refuse to kill your enemy even when he is trying to kill you ... still trusting God is just...*

Psalms 57 & 142

Circumstances: When Gad, Seer of David, comes to meet David while he is hiding from Saul inside the Cave of Adullam.

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 22:1-5; 2 Samuel 23:13; and 1 Chronicles 11:15-19

Psalm 57

I have made trips to the farm houses in the north of England and Wales. It's a wonderful sight to watch the sheep and rams on the green meadows, especially seeing the guide dog at work barking and bringing the sheep back to the fold. Once we happened to watch sheep-dipping, a method used by farmers to protect their sheep from infestation against external parasites using insecticide and fungicide. The shepherd has to hold the sheep by its horns and push it under the surface at least once and for a few seconds. I asked if the sheep understood what was happening. To which the shepherd replied, "They haven't got a clue."

Surely, you and I have had similar experiences in life that have made us feel very sympathetic towards such helpless animals. Likewise, we are unable to figure out the reason we are made to endure such treatments from the Shepherd we have trusted. And God, the chief shepherd, doesn't give us a hint of explanation either.

The same was happening in David's life too.

You don't want to live in a cave or hide inside there, especially if there's a hostile army outside seeking to kill you! Say if were holed up in a cave, hiding from a madman and his army, and if God had promised you something that

Notes:

didn't seem to be coming true, isn't it sensible that the last thing you would be doing would be writing a song of praise to God?

Yet, here is David, singing in the cave! And he's not singing a sad song! He's exalting the Lord! He has something to teach us about how we are to think and act in times when we're holed up in a cave, when God's promises don't seem true.

David must have wondered,

- "God, why are You allowing this to happen to me?
- You anointed me as king; I didn't choose the job
- Why don't You remove Saul and put me in office?"

But Psalm 57 shows us that David understood something deeper. Although he may not have realized why God was allowing him to suffer, he did understand what God wanted from him in his suffering.

David understood that the question he is supposed to ask was not "Why me God?" but instead "what do You want from my life in the midst of this trial and as a result of this trial?" And the answer to which is, "God wants to be glorified." This is the theme of Psalm 57.

V 1-6, Trusting God in your trials glorifies Him

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy!

I look to you for protection.

I will hide beneath the shadow of your wings

until the danger passes by.

² I cry out to God Most High

*to **God who will fulfill his purpose for me.***

³ He will send help from heaven to rescue me,

disgracing those who hound me.

Selah

Notes:

My God will send forth his unfailing love and faithfulness.

*⁴I am surrounded by fierce lions
who greedily devour human prey—
whose teeth pierce like spears and arrows,
and whose tongues cut like swords.*

*⁵Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens!
May your glory shine over all the earth.*

*⁶My enemies have set a trap for me.
I am weary from distress.
They have dug a deep pit in my path,
but they themselves have fallen into it.*

Selah

Rely upon God alone, V1

Just as how a mother bird shields her younglings from predators, from the elements, and from danger by gathering them under her wings, we should also trust God alone to be our shield.

Trusting means going to God in prayer, V2

Prayer is an acknowledgment that our need is not partial, but total. Prayer says to God and to anyone else around, “I am a dependent person. I am not self-sufficient. I cannot handle this situation in my own strength, but only in Your strength, Lord!”

Trust that God is greater than all your problems, V4-6

Poetic language describing the enemies:

- Lions
- fire-breathing dragons
- whose teeth are spears and arrows,

Notes:

- Whose tongues are sharp swords

Selah

With the focus now shifting, David realises that his God is bigger than all his problems.



GOD >>
IS GREATER THAN MY PROBLEMS

As I always say, the bigger your problem, the bigger the opportunity for God to be glorified as you trust Him with your problem and the greater the victory.

V 7-11, Praising God in your trials glorifies Him

*⁷ My heart is confident in you, O God;
my heart is confident.*

No wonder I can sing your praises!

⁸ Wake up, my heart!

Wake up, O lyre and harp!

I will wake the dawn with my song.

⁹ I will thank you, Lord, among all the people.

Notes:

I will sing your praises among the nations.

¹⁰ For your unfailing love is as high as the heavens.

Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.

¹¹ Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens.

May your glory shine over all the earth.

Deliberate focus to Praise God, V 7-9

Our natural response is to complain and get angry at God, or to get depressed. But David had fixed his heart on God to praise while the enemy fixed a net to trap him.

Praise of God's goodness is a testimony to others, V 10-11

Even though David was going through extreme difficulty, he wants to sing about how good his God is, so that others will hear and glorify God.

- His goodness
- His loving kindness and His faithfulness

It is important that you focus your praise on God's loyal love and faithfulness in a time of trial. Because it is precisely those qualities that Satan tempts you to doubt at such a time.

You will be tempted to think, "If God loves me, why is this happening to me?"

But David comes out singing on top of his voice from the cave, "*For your unfailing love is as high as the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens. May your glory shine over all the earth.*"

Notes:

Psalm 142

If I were holed up in a cave, trying to save my life from a king and his army, and if it seemed as if God had promised me something which He was not delivering, probably the last thing I'd do would be to write songs of praise!



When God puts you in circumstances where you feel trapped and alone, cry out to Him in a believing prayer.

V 1, David's cry

*I cry out to the LORD with my voice;
With my voice to the LORD I make my supplication.*

David very well knew the pagan gods worshipped by the surrounding

Notes:

Gentiles; however, he was determined that he would never cry out to them, but to the Lord only. This is more than an appeal to God for help.

V 2, David's complaint

*² I pour out my complaint before Him;
I declare before Him my trouble.*

Complaining was not a means to tell God what He does not know already, rather a means for David's relief, not for God's information. We should not be hypocrites toward God uttering polished polite prayers when our hearts are hurting due to our circumstances. He knows our thoughts, there's nothing we can hide from Him.

V 3-4, David's Prayer

*³ When my spirit was overwhelmed within me,
Then You knew my path.
In the way in which I walk
They have secretly set a snare for me.
⁴ Look on my right hand and see,
For there is no one who acknowledges me;
Refuge has failed me;
No one cares for my soul.*

David was overwhelmed yet he found confidence in knowing that God knew his walk and his plight. He didn't know where the traps were, but he knew they were out waiting for him. He also knew that he could depend upon God who could preserve him from secret plans of the enemies.

Deserted and lonely, David's cry declares that he knew that even as he is forsaken by men, God had not forsaken him. Even if every other refuge had failed, David found that God will lend His ear for his cry.

Notes:

V 5, David's trust in God alone

*⁵ I cried out to You, O LORD:
I said, "You are my refuge,
My portion in the land of the living.*

As the cry stops, look at the words he uses!

- My God
- My refuge
- My portion

There were cities of refuge for the protection of the Israelites for specific circumstances; however, David doesn't find refuge in any of them, but God.

V 6-7, David's Prayer for deliverance

*⁶ Attend to my cry,
For I am brought very low;
Deliver me from my persecutors,
For they are stronger than I.
⁷ Bring my soul out of prison,
That I may praise Your name;
The righteous shall surround me,
For You shall deal bountifully with me."*

David starts his cry again! He confesses his lowly circumstances. David, the one who once killed a giant, acknowledges his present weakness – that's a good place for him to be. So that God's strength could soon flood his life.

Conclusion

Although David's cry comes from a great sense of humility and weakness, he ends the psalm with great confidence.

Notes:

Cause	Remedy
David begins the song with a complaint (V2)	But closes with a confident praise of God
He sings with a great sense of loneliness (V4)	He chose to keep his confidence in God, to be surrounded by the righteous
He sings of being low and weak	Confidence in future goodness that God will bless him bountifully

Apostle Paul

Philippians 4:6, Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

The Christian Pilgrim by Jonathan Edwards

“God is the highest good of the reasonable creature; and the enjoyment of him is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied.

To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here.

Fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, or children, or the company of earthly friends, are but shadows; but the enjoyment of God is the substance.

These are but scattered beams; but God is the sun.

These are but streams; but God is the fountain.

These are but drops; but God is the ocean.

Therefore it becomes us to spend this life only as a journey towards heaven, as it becomes us to make the seeking of our highest end and proper good, the whole work of our lives; to which we should subordinate all other concerns of life.

Notes:

Why should we labour for, or set our hearts on, anything else, but that which is our proper end, and true happiness?"

Application

Why does God allow people like David, His chosen ones and other saints to spend time in caves or prisons?

Have you ever had a cave experience? If so, what have you learned from it?

Have you ever crossed the line from permissible complaining to sinful railing/murmuring against God?

Can you confidently declare, 'my God', 'my refuge'?

Is God your portion or is it your job or business or something else?

Where does true happiness come from: God or worldly things?

Notes:

11. Your friends don't want you...

Your enemies don't want you...

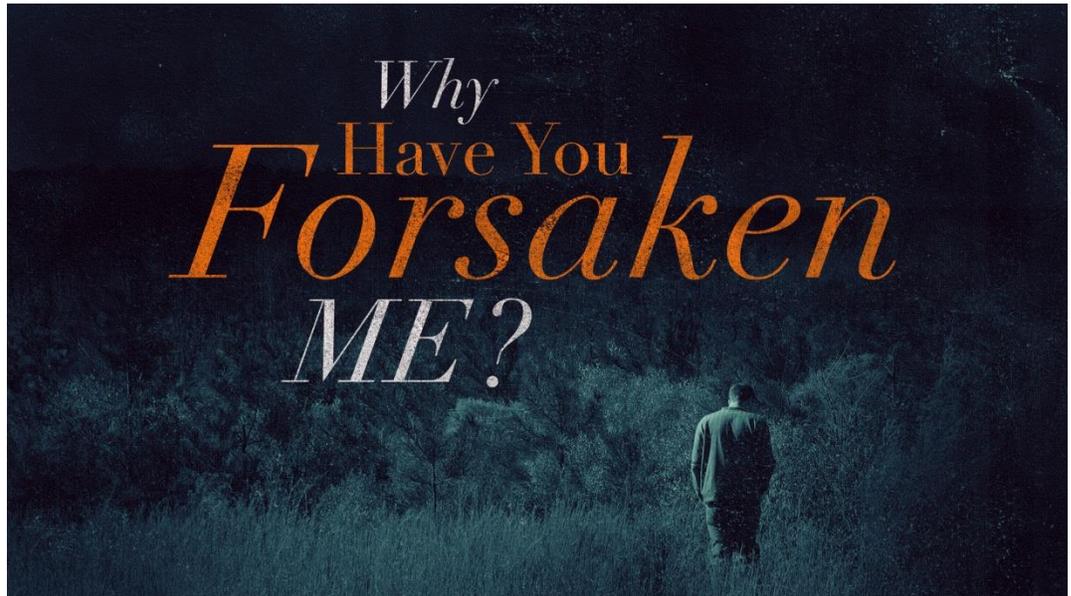
The very people who are your companions don't want you...

They want to stone you to death... who do you turn to...

Psalm 22

Circumstances: David turned to the Lord for strength at Ziklag when the Amalekites had stolen all the women and children and his own men were about to kill him.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 30



This psalm of David is called "**The Psalm of the Cross**," as much of the suffering described in it was literally fulfilled in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, although it may also relate to the sufferings experienced by David.

Notes:

The psalm begins with a cry that was uttered by Jesus on the cross (Matthew 27:46). The first half of the psalm describes a sufferer surrounded by his enemies, feeling forsaken by God. While much of the suffering is figurative (eg, Many bulls have surrounded me), some of it was literally fulfilled. Not just verse 1, which was uttered by Jesus, verse 8 was the very words of the chief priests and scribes who mocked Jesus while He hung on the cross (Matthew 27:43). There was also the piercing of the hands and feet, the dividing of the garments (Matthew 27:35).

As the psalmist cries out for deliverance, he also expresses hope based upon God's faithfulness in the past. At the end of the first half, the psalmist declares that God has answered him.

The second half of the psalm expresses the joy of "the Victorious Sufferer." He will gladly praise God for hearing him and providing deliverance. He encourages all those who fear God to praise and glorify Him, confident that God's blessings will extend to many nations and to people not yet born. This is because the kingdom is the Lord's, and He rules over the nations.

V 1-2, Lonely cry

My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?

Why are You so far from helping Me,

And from the words of My groaning?

² O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear;

And in the night season, and am not silent.

- Why has God forsaken?
- Why does God not help?
- Why does God not hear?

V 3-5, Praise of His goodness

³ But You are holy,

Enthroned in the praises of Israel.

Notes:

*⁴ Our fathers trusted in You;
They trusted, and You delivered them.
⁵ They cried to You, and were delivered;
They trusted in You, and were not ashamed.*

- God enthrones in the praises of Israel
- Forefathers trusted Him and He delivered them
- When they cried out, God did not disappoint them

V 6-8, Torment from others

*⁶ But I am a worm, and no man;
A reproach of men, and despised by the people.
⁷ All those who see Me ridicule Me;
They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,
⁸ "He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him;
Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!"*

- Reduced like a worm
- Despised by others
- Ridiculed because he trusted in God

V 9-11, His faith in God

*⁹ But You are He who took Me out of the womb;
You made Me trust while on My mother's breasts.
¹⁰ I was cast upon You from birth.
From My mother's womb
You have been My God.
¹¹ Be not far from Me,
For trouble is near;
For there is none to help.*

Notes:

- God has been with him since he was born
- God is his only Helper

V 12-18, His suffering in detail

*12 Many bulls have surrounded Me;
Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me.*

*13 They gape at Me with their mouths,
Like a raging and roaring lion.*

*14 I am poured out like water,
And all My bones are out of joint;*

*My heart is like wax;
It has melted within Me.*

*15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And My tongue clings to My jaws;
You have brought Me to the dust of death.*

*16 For dogs have surrounded Me;
The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me.*

*They pierced My hands and My feet;
17 I can count all My bones.*

They look and stare at Me.

*18 They divide My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots.*

- Men like strong bulls of Bashan have surrounded him
- With mouths opened like a raging and roaring lion
- He is poured like water
- With his bones out of joint
- His heart like wax, melted within him
- Strength dried up, tongues clinging to his jaws

Notes:

- Like dogs, evil doers encircle him
- They have pierced his hands and feet
- He is brought to the dust of death
- They divide his garments and cast lots for his clothing

V 19-21, His final cry

*19 But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me;
 O My Strength, hasten to help Me!
 20 Deliver Me from the sword,
 My precious life from the power of the dog.
 21 Save Me from the lion's mouth
 And from the horns of the wild oxen!
 You have answered Me.*

- For God not to be far off
- To come quickly to help
- To deliver his life from the sword
- Save him from the lion's mouth

V 22-25, His final cry; *God be praised*

*22 I will declare Your name to My brethren;
 In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.
 23 You who fear the LORD, praise Him!
 All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,
 And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!
 24 For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;
 Nor has He hidden His face from Him;
 But when He cried to Him, He heard.*

Notes:

*25 My praise shall be of You in the great assembly;
I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.*

- The sufferer will yet praise God
- Proclaiming His name to his brothers
- Praising Him in the middle of the assembly
- Let those who fear God praise Him
- Let the descendants of Jacob honour Him
- Let the descendants of Israel stand in awe of Him
- God has not despised or abhorred his affliction
- God has not hidden His face from him, but hearkened to his cry
- The sufferer will praise God and pay his vows in the great assembly,
- before them that fear Him

V 26-31, God be worshipped

*26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
Those who seek Him will praise the LORD.
Let your heart live forever!*

*27 All the ends of the world
Shall remember and turn to the LORD,
And all the families of the nations
Shall worship before You.*

*28 For the kingdom is the LORD's,
And He rules over the nations.*

*29 All the prosperous of the earth
Shall eat and worship;
All those who go down to the dust
Shall bow before Him,
Even he who cannot keep himself alive.*

Notes:

³⁰ A posterity shall serve Him.

It will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation,

*³¹ They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born,
That He has done this.*

- By the meek, and those that seek the Lord
- They shall eat and be satisfied
- They shall praise Him
- Who shall bear these things in mind and return to the Lord
- All families of the nations will bow down before Him
- For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He is the Ruler among the nations
- By the prosperous and the dead
- The prosperous will eat and worship Him
- The dying shall bow before Him
- By the generations to come
- For men shall tell of what God has done
- People not yet born shall hear of God's justice

Conclusion

On the cross at that moment, a holy transaction took place. God the Father regarded God the Son as if He were a sinner. As the Apostle Paul would later write, **2 Corinthians 5:21**, *God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

Jesus referred to God as His Father all the time. But while on the cross, He cries out, *"My God Me God."* Following crucifixion, we have gained the privilege of calling God our Father. This was the divine exchange that took place for the human kind.

***John 20:17**, ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"*

Note the pronoun used by Jesus here!

Notes:

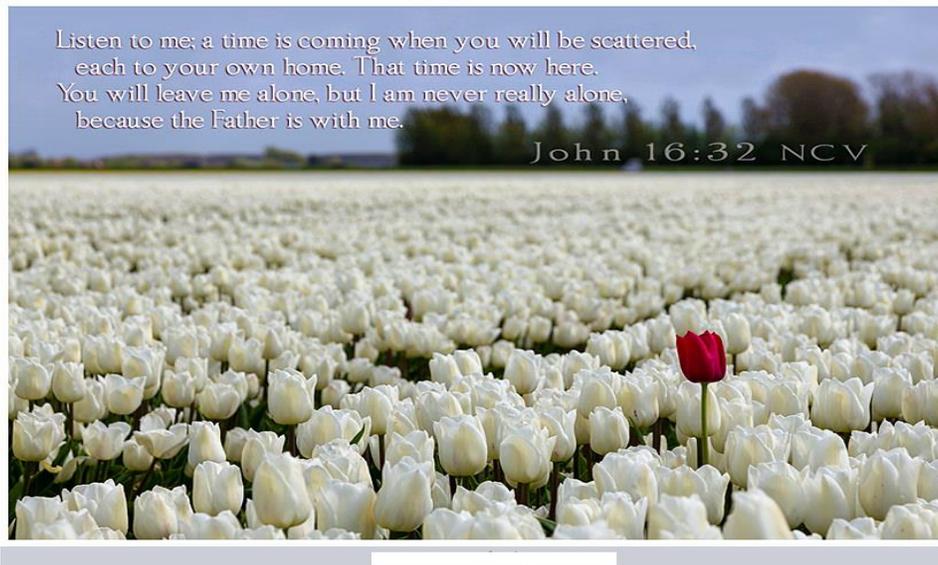
Jesus Christ

Jesus says the following to His disciples before leaving for the cross at the Upper Room.

John 16:32, Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

- Over 20,000 people came to eat the bread and fish
- Multitudes were healed
- People were raised from the dead
- Blind eyes were opened
- Deaf ears could hear
- Lame could walk
- Left with 12 disciples
- Now one had betrayed Him
- Left with the final 11
- Now even they are going to leave

Yet, look at the words of Jesus Christ!!



Notes:

And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

What a confidence in having such a wonderful God with us!

Apostle Paul

- Apostle Paul had many co-workers with him during his ministry.
- Established so many churches
- Multitudes benefited through his ministry.

But while writing his final words to his spiritual son, he writes that everyone had left him!!

*2 Timothy 4:16-17, ¹⁶At my first defense **no one stood with me, but all forsook me.** ¹⁷**But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me** so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.*

Application

We could easily imagine the life of King David where he found himself in seemingly impossible circumstances and wonder why God did not rescue him immediately. How can such feelings be overcome?

Both David and Jesus pose this question: “God, why did you forsake me?” Have you ever asked God, why me??

David knew what it was like to feel the presence and the deliverance of God several times in His life. The absence of God in this circumstance not only made him feel devastated, but also made him forget all his past experiences with God. Worst of all, there was no apparent explanation as to why God didn’t help him. How do you relate this to your life?

Notes:

David understood that in the depth of agony and the sense of abandonment, one could still appeal to God in remembrance of better times. Do you remember the testimony of what the Lord has done for you in the past?

David's crisis would be bad enough even if surrounded by sympathetic friends; his misery was multiplied because there were violent and wicked men on every side. How would you feel at times like this?

David believed that he could endure anything if he enjoyed the conscious presence of God. His plea is not focused on the change of his situation, but on the presence of God in the crisis. Do you seek the presence of God or are your prayers focused on changing/getting rid of the problematic circumstance/person?

Practical help

- In a truly grace-filled man, his trust in God is known.
- This trust by believing men is not understood by the world.
- This true faith will almost certainly be mocked at some time or another.
- The time shall come when the man of faith who has trusted in God shall be abundantly justified.

Despite his feelings of being forsaken by God and man, David drew encouragement from God's past records of faithfulness. And despite his terrible sufferings at the hands of his enemies, he kept praying, and he ultimately found that God had heard his cries for help. Could we too draw such confidence in God's faithfulness?

Notes:

12. *The wait is over... what God had promised is being fulfilled... partially...*

Psalm 60

Circumstances: National disorder ensued after Saul was removed as the king of Israel. After David fights against Mesopotamia and Syria of Zobah, and Joab returns and kills twelve thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt, he writes this psalm.

- 2 Samuel 8:1-8 – records David’s victories over Philistia, Moab, and Syria.
- 2 Samuel 10:1-19 tells of David’s victories over Ammon and Syria.
- 1 Chronicles 18:11-13 give us David’s victories over Edom (and specifically in the Valley of Salt), Moab, Ammon, Philistia, and Amalek.

Scriptures: 2 Samuel 3, 4 & 21:1-14 and 1 Chronicles 17:16 - 19:19

V 1-5, Petition to God for mercy for the nation

O God, You have cast us off;

You have broken us down;

You have been displeased;

Oh, restore us again!

² You have made the earth tremble;

You have broken it;

Heal its breaches, for it is shaking.

³ You have shown Your people hard things;

You have made us drink the wine of confusion.

⁴ You have given a banner to those who fear You,

That it may be displayed because of the truth.

Notes:

Selah

*⁵ That Your beloved may be delivered,
Save with Your right hand, and hear me.*

David and the armies of Israel fight against foreign armies and experience a defeat. David knew that when the Lord fights for Israel, victory is assured. If there's defeat, then it is likely that God was displeased. Therefore, he appealed to what he believed to be the ultimate cause, not the immediate cause.

David appeals to God for His favour to be restored and cries for restoration, which immediately brings hope to the matter.

David perceives the relationship between God and Israel.

- God has rejected us
- God has broken us
- God has been angry
- God has made the land quake
- God has made the land split open
- God has made His people experience hardship
- God has given them over to drunkenness

V 6-8, God's word of triumph

⁶ God has spoken in His holiness:

"I will rejoice;

I will divide Shechem

And measure out the Valley of Succoth.

⁷ Gilead is Mine, and Manasseh is Mine;

Ephraim also is the helmet for My head;

Judah is My lawgiver.

⁸ Moab is My washpot;

Over Edom I will cast My shoe;

Philistia, shout in triumph because of Me."

Notes:

God Himself would rejoice in His Lordship over Israel and His victory over the nations. God also said that He would exalt Himself over the surrounding nations. Both Moab and Edom were noted for their pride (Isaiah 16:6; Obadiah 3). Here, God gives them places of humble service.

Prophetically, David speaks of God's answer.

- I will exult
- I will portion out
- I will measure out
- Gilead is Mine
- Manasseh is Mine
- Helmet of My head
- My sceptre
- Will throw My shoe
- Shout loud because of Me

Joshua allocated these places that are mentioned here: Shechem, Valley of Succoth and Gilead.

Three tribes: Manasseh, Ephraim & Judah

Three defeated Canaanite nations: Moab, Edom & Philistia

V 9-12, Impossible victory possible by God

⁹ Who will bring me to the strong city?

Who will lead me to Edom?

¹⁰ Is it not You, O God, who cast us off?

And You, O God, who did not go out with our armies?

¹¹ Give us help from trouble,

For the help of man is useless.

¹² Through God we will do valiantly,

For it is He who shall tread down our enemies.

Notes:

David knew that their previous defeat was because God did not fight for them. He trusted that God would lead Israel to victory over the strong city.

David witnessed and tasted brave men accomplish great things in the battle over the enemies; yet for David, the help and bravery of courageous men were not enough and he considered them useless. Only God's help would lead them to victory.

God's part is to not only place His hands in ours but also to place His foot on the enemies.

The psalm starts with defeat, but ends with glorious victory.

Jesus Christ

Jesus knew that He can do nothing without the Father.

*John 5:19, Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the **Son can do nothing of Himself**, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.*

*John 5:30, **I can of Myself do nothing**. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.*

*John 8:28, Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that **I do nothing of Myself**; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.*

Jesus also wanted us to know that we can do nothing without HIM.

*John 15:5, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for **without Me you can do nothing**.*

Apostle Paul

Romans chapter 7 is a good place to know about the life of Apostle Paul. He says that he ended up doing what he didn't want to do and not doing what he was supposed to do.

Notes:

However, he summarises his life on the letter to the church in Philippi in a positive way:

Philippians 4:13, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Application

David thought of how God had cared for Israel down through the years even in time of rebellion. God had preserved them and brought them back to Himself. How do you relate this to your life?

In your life, do you experience the truth that God is a promise-keeping God?

When David faced failure in his own strength and called on God, God showed him the way to victory. Do you tend to do things with your strength or God's strength?

Do you give God the glory for all your achievements? Or do you call yourself a self-made person?

Notes:

Notes:

13. *The wait is over... what God had promised is being fulfilled... Fully...*

Psalm 30

Circumstances: David gives the Lord all credit for promoting him to be king over Israel. He reminds us to sing praises to the Lord and that He is the source of all our blessings.

Scripture: 2 Samuel 5

V 1-3, David praises God for delivering him from death

¹ I will exalt you, LORD, for you rescued me.

You refused to let my enemies triumph over me.

² O LORD my God, I cried to you for help,

and you restored my health.

³ You brought me up from the grave, O LORD.

You kept me from falling into the pit of death.

David says that the Lord had brought him up from the grave and that he was spared from going down into the pit. This tells us of the ruthlessness that David was experiencing. David seemed to think that all was lost concerning his life and that there was no other hope except the Lord's help.

V 4-5, Praising God that His anger has changed to favour

⁴ Sing to the LORD, all you godly ones!

Praise his holy name.

⁵ For his anger lasts only a moment,

but his favour lasts a lifetime!

Weeping may last through the night,

but joy comes with the morning.

Notes:

Praise God that His anger only lasts for but a moment!

How many times we sin and take bad decisions that anger the Lord?

God has the right to hold our transgressions over our heads, keep us accountable for every violation, and burn His wrath toward us for our disloyalty.

However, God's favour lasts a lifetime.

For all that we have done and continue to do against God, we can still find His favour. There is no one on earth that we will ever find that has this same character. That's just not possible at all!!

David expresses the new day that we have with the Lord. While weeping may remain for this night because of what we have done, tomorrow brings a new day where we can rejoice in the Lord. We cannot let the pain of our guilt burden us down where we cannot continue living for the Lord. David says a new day brings us new opportunities to find favour with the Lord and rejoice in Him.

V 6-7, Terror to Security

⁶ When I was prosperous, I said,

"Nothing can stop me now!"

⁷ Your favour, O LORD, made me as secure as a mountain.

Then you turned away from me, and I was shattered.

Terror when without the Lord

When God hides His face, then terror falls upon David.

Security with God

David was able to say 'I will never be shaken' because he knew being with God makes him stronger so much so that no one could ever stand against him.

Notes:

V 8-9, Destruction to security

*⁸ I cried out to you, O LORD.
I begged the Lord for mercy, saying,
⁹ “What will you gain if I die,
if I sink into the grave?
Can my dust praise you?
Can it tell of your faithfulness?*

David is about to go to his death and is calling out for deliverance. Never too late to call on God!!

- God prospered him
- Gave him stability
- Made him strong
- Answered his prayers
- Protected him from death so he could praise HIM for His faithfulness

Two rhetorical questions David asks expecting no reply from the Lord.

- What will you gain if I die, if I sink into the grave?
- Can my dust praise you? Can it tell of your faithfulness?

V 10-12, Destruction to mercy

*¹⁰ Hear me, LORD, and have mercy on me.
Help me, O LORD.”
¹¹ You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing.
You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy,
¹² that I might sing praises to you and not be silent.
O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever!*

Three requests from David:

- Hear me

Notes:

- Be gracious
- Be my helper

The response from God made David dance:

- Turned his mourning into dancing
- Loosened his sackcloth and girded him with gladness
- Made him to sing praises for he will not be silent
- Caused him to give thanks forever

Conclusion

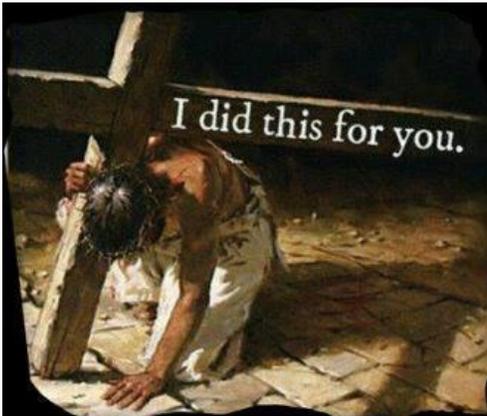
David concludes this psalm saying that we must always give thanks for how God has changed our lives. We need to thank God for placing us where we are today. Who knows where we would be in life with the guidance and protection of the Lord!

Don't give thanks once, but repeatedly and forever until we die since He has seen it fit to bless us so richly!!

Jesus Christ

Jesus was able to endure the cross because he was able to see the joy that was set before Him.

Hebrews 12:2, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.



Notes:

Apostle Paul

Paul mentions the tribulations he went through while writing to the church in Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians 3:1-4, Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone,² and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith,³ that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this.⁴ For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know.

Paul was able to say that he had faith to endure as he was walking with the Lord.

*If we could see the joy that comes with the fulfilment of God's promise, then all our present afflictions will look easy and simple, enabling us to sing that sorrow only lasts but for a night but joy comes in the morning. **Thirteen long years of afflictions look like a night!!***

Application

How true is this in David's life! David kills an innocent warrior of the Lord's army so he could marry his wife Bathsheba to cover up his sin of adultery. But what does God record of David's character? That David was a man after His own heart. Anger for a moment, favour for a lifetime. Is there something holding you back from going closer to God today?

Everyone remembers God and comes to Him in prayer when in trouble; however, David was focused on God when he was in trouble, running for his life, and also after he was delivered and made king, never wavering in his focus of God. How about you?

Notes:

If we perceive that God has placed us here for a purpose and everything has been ordained by Him, then our behaviour and attitude will not change be it victory or failure. What are the practical steps you can take towards this?

The book of Deuteronomy could be summarised in a line: 'you are going to be in a land that's plentiful but don't ever forget the Lord who blessed you.'

Deuteronomy 8:7-11, The Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with rivers and pools of water, with springs that flow in the valleys and hills, ⁸ a land that has wheat and barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil, and honey. ⁹ It is a land where you will have plenty of food, where you will have everything you need, where the rocks are iron, and where you can dig copper out of the hills.¹⁰ When you have all you want to eat, then praise the Lord your God for giving you a good land. ¹¹ Be careful not to forget the Lord your God so that you fail to obey his commands, laws, and rules that I am giving to you today.

Now let me ask you this

What have you done for God to bring you here out of India?

Do you think you are more qualified than those who are in India/Sri Lanka?

Does your life portray that God has brought you here with a purpose?

Is your heart filled with pride?

Examine yourself today.

Notes:

Notes:

Notes:

14. *The promise is fulfilled ... the enemies start attacking... victory...*

Psalm 21

Circumstances: This is a song of victory David writes after he was attacked by the Philistines soon after becoming king over all Israel. **Psalm 20** is a public worship song of victory; hence, both the psalms can be read combined as one.

Scripture: 2 Samuel 5 & 12

David wrote of himself as the third person, and as "the king." He penned the Psalm, not so much for his own use, as for his people's. It is, in fact, a national anthem, celebrating the majesty and glory of David, but ascribing both to God - expressing confidence in David's future, but building that confidence upon God alone! A thanksgiving for success or for granting that which had been so earnestly sought.

V 1- 3, Thanking God for what had been asked

*The king shall have joy in Your strength, O LORD;
And in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!
² You have given him his heart's desire,
And have not withheld the request of his lips.*

Selah

*³ For You meet him with the blessings of goodness;
You set a crown of pure gold upon his head.*

David's heart longed for victory over the enemy and that God would establish his kingship. Here David acknowledges that it's not his strength but God that brought him honour and glory. The glory was given to him as a gift from God.

Notes:

Whenever the king wins a war over his enemies, a crown is being laid on his head.

V 4-7, Blessings were made permanent and eternal

⁴ He asked life from You, and You gave it to him—

Length of days forever and ever.

⁵ His glory is great in Your salvation;

Honour and majesty You have placed upon him.

⁶ For You have made him most blessed forever;

You have made him exceedingly glad with Your presence.

⁷ For the king trusts in the LORD,

And through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved.

- God meets him with the blessings of good
- God sets a crown on his head to reaffirm of David's kingship
- God gave him his life
- God placed splendor upon David
- God placed majesty
- God blessed him with a long life
- David would be joyful in His presence

V 8-12, A comprehensive victory over his enemies

⁸ Your hand will find all Your enemies;

Your right hand will find those who hate You.

⁹ You shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of Your anger;

The LORD shall swallow them up in His wrath,

And the fire shall devour them.

¹⁰ Their offspring You shall destroy from the earth,

And their descendants from among the sons of men.

¹¹ For they intended evil against You;

Notes:

They devised a plot which they are not able to perform.

¹² Therefore You will make them turn their back;

You will make ready Your arrows on Your string toward their faces.

A conditional promise of God if they stay faithful to Him.

- Power over your enemies
- Your enemies will be destroyed
- Your enemies and their descendants will be cut off and you will see them no more
- Your enemies will not succeed in their plans
- Your enemies will retreat in the battle

V 13, God be glorified in this final victory

¹³ Be exalted, O LORD, in Your own strength!

We will sing and praise Your power

David joined his people in lifting up the Lord because of His strength. They promised continued worship for His power that had brought this blessing.

- God exalted.
- God alone exalted.
- God exalted by His own strength.
- His people singing His praise.

Conclusion

God's king wins because he prays. He doesn't win because he has the best of armies, although 1 Chronicles goes on and on about what an impressive army David had. He doesn't win because of his superior wisdom or tactics. He doesn't win because his enemies are weak or stupid. God's king wins because he prays, and because God gives him the victory.

Notes:

Apostle Paul

Look at the great victory that brought salvation in the life of Apostle Paul.

Acts 16: 25-30, ²⁵ But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. ²⁷ And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself ²⁸ But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." ²⁹ Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

What do we understand from the above passage?

- They were not praying for release from the prison
- They were not crying
- They were not praying for their hardship to be eased
- They were not praying for their escape
- It started with Paul and Silas but everyone else joined in
- They all stayed in despite the doors being open

They were praising God for the opportunity to share the gospel about salvation!

Here in **Psalm 21:5**, *His glory is great in Your salvation; Honour and majesty You have placed upon him.*

Therefore, let every opportunity present the possibility for sharing the gospel and for people to be saved.

Notes:

Application

*² You have given him his heart's desire,
And have not withheld the request of his lips.*

I am so impressed by this verse; God did not withhold any of the requests:

Can you also say this?

Where is the focus on your prayer?

Take time to ponder and correct yourself as to why your prayers were not answered?

Not abiding in Jesus (John 15:7)

Unbelief (Matthew 17:20-21)

Failure to fast (Matthew 17:21)

A bad marriage relationship (1 Peter 3:7)

Not asking (James 4:2)

Selfish praying (James 4:3)

Disobedience (1 John 3:22)

Notes:

Not praying according to God's will (1 John 5:14-15)

Unconfessed sin (James 5:16)

Cold, passionless prayer (James 5:16-18; 2 Kings 20:5)

Prayerlessness and lack of persistence in prayer (Luke 18:1-7; Psalm 55:17)

Sin against others (Matthew 5:23-24)

Lack of unity (Matthew 18:19)

Not praying in the name of Jesus (John 14:13-14)

Pride (James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5, Proverbs 3:34)

Lying and deceitfulness (Psalm 17:1)

Lack of bible reading and bible teaching (Proverbs 28:9)

Trusting in the length or form of prayer (Matthew 6:7)

Notes:

Notes:

Notes:

15. *The promise is fulfilled ... ALL enemies overthrown...*

Psalm 139

Circumstances: When David was made King over Israel, he was praising God for His victory and promotion.

Scriptures: 1 Chronicles 13

There is no other place in the Scripture where the bigness of God is as strikingly set forth as in this psalm. High thought of God and the expressive beauty of the poetic language makes it a wonderful psalm.

Four sets of six verses:

V 1-6, *God's Omniscience*

V 7-12, *God's Omnipresence*

V 13-18, *God's Omnipotence*

V 19-24, *David's loyalty to praise God*

V 1-6, God's Omniscience

O LORD, You have searched me and known me.

² You know my sitting down and my rising up;

You understand my thought afar off.

³ You comprehend my path and my lying down,

And are acquainted with all my ways.

⁴ For there is not a word on my tongue,

But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.

⁵ You have hedged me behind and before,

And laid Your hand upon me.

Notes:

*⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
It is high, I cannot attain it.*



God knows absolutely everything about me!

He knows all of my actions:

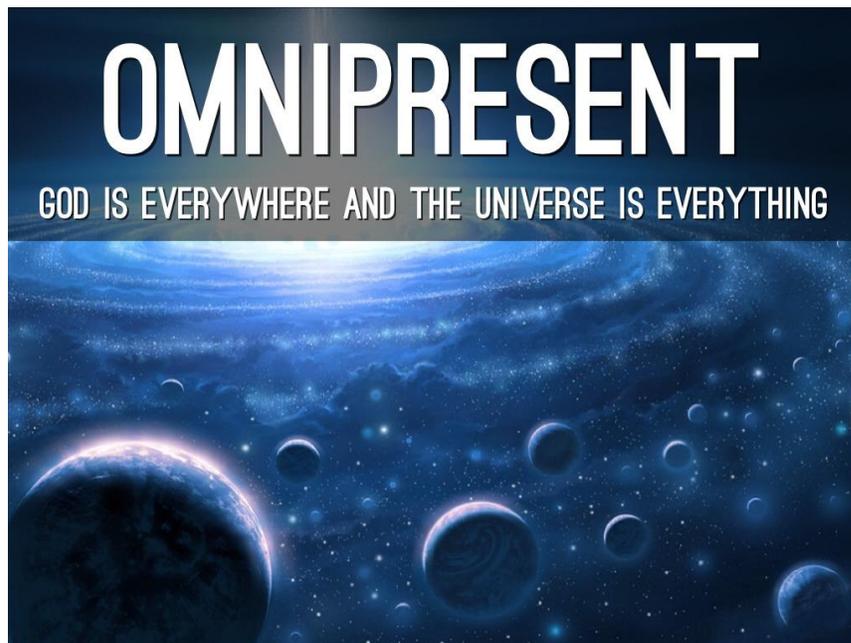
- When I sit down and when I get up
- When I go somewhere and when I lie down
- He is intimately acquainted with all my ways!
- He knows my words
- He even knows what I am going to say before I say it
- He even knows my thoughts from afar
- Like a caged bird, He's got me surrounded, with His hand upon me
- There is no escape from His thorough, penetrating knowledge.

So David exclaims, *"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot attain to it."*

Notes:

V 7-12, God's Omnipresence

*7 Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Your presence?
8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.
9 If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
10 Even there Your hand shall lead me,
And Your right hand shall hold me.
11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall^[a] on me,"
Even the night shall be light about me;
12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You,
But the night shines as the day;
The darkness and the light are both alike to You.*



Notes:

David considers the truth that God is present everywhere - no corner or dimension of the universe hidden from Him, with the heaven not too high, nor hell too low; God is everywhere.

It is impossible for anyone to escape the presence of God.

- Adam and Eve tried to hide from God, but found out they could not do so.
- Achan tried to hide stolen goods from God, but out found he could not do so.
- Jonah tried to run from God, but found out he could not do so.
- It is impossible to escape God's presence by going up or down, east or west, or by trying to hide in the cover of the deepest darkness.
- We cannot escape His presence by distance or darkness. We cannot escape God by death. He is on both sides of the grave.
- No man can run fast enough to leave God behind.
- Darkness may hide men from men, but it cannot hide men from God.

No matter where man may go, God is already there!

V 13-18, God's Omnipotence

13 For You formed my inward parts;

You covered me in my mother's womb.

14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;^[b]

Marvelous are Your works,

And that my soul knows very well.

15 My frame was not hidden from You,

When I was made in secret,

And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.

And in Your book they all were written,

Notes:

*The days fashioned for me,
When as yet there were none of them.
17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!
How great is the sum of them!
18 If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand;
When I awake, I am still with You.*

God's omniscience and omnipresence extend even to the womb. God sees and knows everything that occurs in the conception and development of human life as it is carefully and skilfully embroidered in the darkness of the womb. David acknowledged the fact that only God has the power to create a human life.

Verse 16 is understood in two ways. Some interpret it to mean that God, like an architect, was acquainted with the blueprint for our physical makeup before we were formed. Others interpret it to mean that God knows the length of our life before it begins.



God is always thinking of us. God thinks about us so much that it would be impossible to count all of His thoughts.

Notes:

His thoughts toward us would easily outnumber the sand.

- We can go to bed at night with the assurance that God is thinking about us.
- We can wake up in the morning with the same assurance.

God never stops thinking about us or being concerned about us

V 19-24, David's loyalty to praise God

19 Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God!

Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men.

20 For they speak against You wickedly;

Your enemies take Your name in vain.^[c]

21 Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You?

And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?

22 I hate them with perfect hatred;

I count them my enemies.

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart;

Try me, and know my anxieties;

24 And see if there is any wicked way in me,

And lead me in the way everlasting.

David abruptly shifts his focus from a spirit of wonder and adoration to intense prayer against the wicked and bloodthirsty men. This prayer was not because these men were against David, but because they opposed God. They speak against God wickedly. David's adoration filled him with zeal for God's honour. David puts himself on to God's side so he himself hates those who hate God. David boasts saying he hates them with perfect hatred, regarding them as enemies.

David takes his theological or theoretical understanding of God's nature and attributes and applies it to his own personal discipleship. The nature and

Notes:

attributes of God were not mere theories. They were the guides to David's spiritual growth.

David knew that he could not know his heart at its depths, so he asks God to know it.

David opened his soul bare before God, asking if there was any unknown or unperceived sin. This showed how much he cared for holiness in his life and how humble he was in recognizing there could be an unperceived wicked way in him.

David ended this majestic psalm by declaring his destination the way everlasting. Trusting the God of complete knowledge and His constant presence would bring David to everlasting life.

Conclusion

How amazing it is to see someone who has won wars and become a king never shift his focus away from the One who kept him there.

He was not in awe of his position but in awe of who God is.

He was not glorifying his victory or his position but God.

Application

Knowing that God is omniscient should motivate us to live holy lives. Knowing that God sees our actions should motivate us to act in a manner in line with His Word. ***How are your actions in the eyes of God?***

Knowing that God knows our words before they are spoken should cause us to exercise caution and discretion before we speak. ***How controlled is your tongue?***

Knowing that God knows everything about us should have an impact on our attitude toward sin. The athletes of Greece and Rome were inspired to run and wrestle by the knowledge that a vast assembly of spectators surrounded

Notes:

them. We too should be inspired to run with confidence the course set before us by the knowledge that God is watching us.

There is absolutely no place where men can go to escape the presence of God. He inhabits yesterday, today, and tomorrow. While sinners try to escape God's presence, believers take comfort in His presence. God's omnipresence should also motivate us to live holy lives. Everything that men do, good and evil alike, is done in the presence of God. ***Are you living with that awareness?***

Men who fill their minds with thoughts about God do not have room for lesser or petty thoughts. Paul writes, "*Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth*" (Colossians 3:2). We should set aside time to be alone with God in quiet meditation or in the study of His Word. ***What are the practical steps that you can take?***

We should love the things that God loves. We should, however, also hate the things God hates. When we love things that God hates, we will have problems in our lives. When we hate things that God loves, we will also have problems in our lives. James writes, "*You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God*" (James 4:4).

We should not tolerate anything in our lives that hinders or impairs our walk with God. Tolerating many "little" things that are displeasing to God can easily destroy us. Men who allow such things in their lives will be destroyed from the inside out. We must give God permission to search us daily and be willing to remove anything that can impede our walk with Him.

Therefore, let this be our prayer too:

*²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;
²⁴ And see if there is any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.*

Notes:

Notes:

Notes:

16. *Prosperity + Complacency + Lethargy = Sin*

Psalm 51

Circumstances: David writes this after being confronted by Prophet Nathan concerning Bathsheba and Uriah the Hittite.

Scriptures: 2 Samuel 11 & 12

David pens this psalm when Nathan had come to him following David's adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband Uriah (2 Samuel 11:1-12:15). This is an outstanding example of a "repentant psalm" (Psalms 6, 38, 130) in which David confesses his sin and prays for forgiveness. We do well to learn from it "the art of confessing our sins" to help us when we have sins to confess to God (1 John 1:9).

David begins with his plea for God to forgive him, appealing to His loving kindness and tender mercy. David doesn't ask God to forgive based on his goodness but based on God's great mercies. Not just forgiveness, he also asks God to cleanse him and restore the joy of salvation.

He follows up with the promise to teach other sinners that they might be converted too to God. That he would sing aloud God's righteousness, knowing that God delights in them. Not only does it delight God, but such praise also blesses His heart, especially when it comes from a person with a broken and contrite heart.

David ends this psalm with a prayer to God asking Him to do good for Zion and Jerusalem. So that people may burn offerings in the altar of God, pleasing Him. David never forgets to pray for God's interest while still praying for his!

V 1-6, Plea

*Have mercy upon me, O God,
According to Your loving kindness;
According to the multitude of Your tender mercies,*

Notes:

Blot out my transgressions.

*² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.*

*³ For I acknowledge my transgressions,
And my sin is always before me.*

*⁴ Against You, You only, have I sinned,
And done this evil in Your sight—
That You may be found just when You speak,
And blameless when You judge.*

*⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin my mother conceived me.*

*⁶ Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts,
And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.*

- Mercy according to God's loving kindness
- Forgiveness according to God's tender mercies
- To wash him and cleanse him from his sins

Confession

- Admission of his sins before him
- Sin against God
- God is just and blameless

Acknowledging

- He is sinful
- He was born in sin
- God wants truth in him

Notes:

V 7-11, Prayer

*⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

*⁸ Make me hear joy and gladness,
That the bones You have broken may rejoice.*

*⁹ Hide Your face from my sins,
And blot out all my iniquities.*

*¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

*¹¹ Do not cast me away from Your presence,
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.*

- For forgiveness
- Hyssop to purge him
- To wash him to be whiter than snow
- To hide his face from sins
- To blot out all his iniquities
- Restoration of joy and gladness
- To create in him a clean heart
- To renew steadfast spirit
- Not to cast him from his presence
- Not to take away the Holy Spirit in him
- To restore the joy of salvation
- To uphold him in generous spirit

Notes:

V 12-13, Promise

*12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,
And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.*

*13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,
And sinners shall be converted to You.*

- He will teach sinners the way of God
- Sinners will be converted to God

V 14-17, Praise

*14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
The God of my salvation,
And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.*

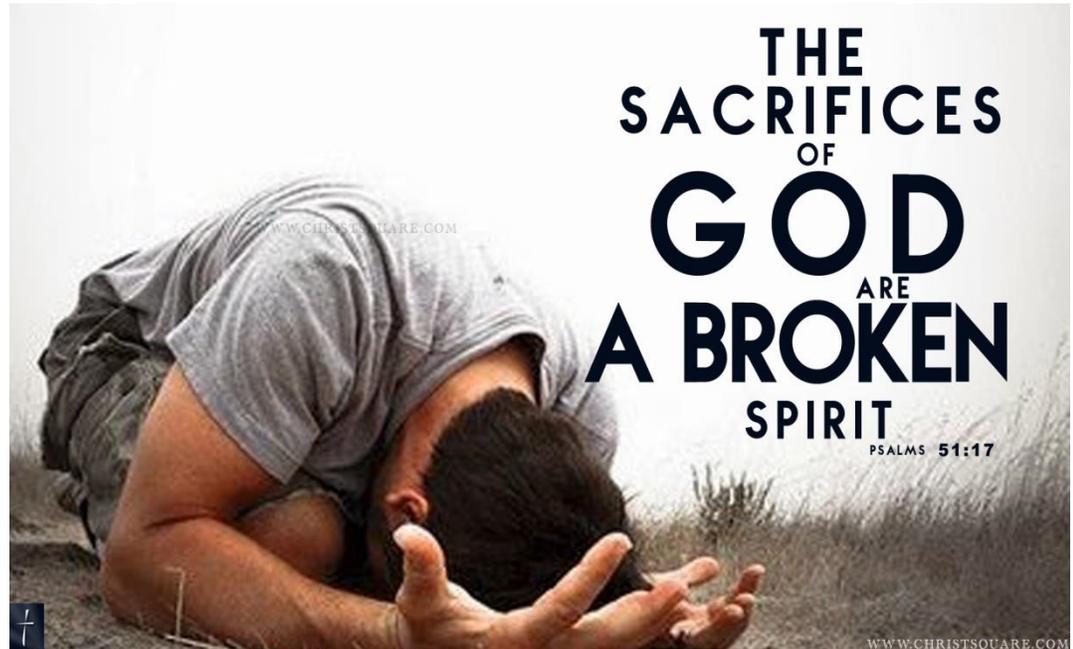
*15 O Lord, open my lips,
And my mouth shall show forth Your praise.*

*16 For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it;
You do not delight in burnt offering.*

*17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,
A broken and a contrite heart—
These, O God, You will not despise.*

- Will sing aloud the God's righteousness
- His mouth will be filled with praise
- He knows what delights God
- Not the offerings but a broken heart

Notes:



V 18-19, Prayer for Zion and Jerusalem

18 Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion;

Build the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness,

With burnt offering and whole burnt offering;

Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.

- God will do His good pleasure on Zion
- God will build the walls of Jerusalem
- God will be pleased with sacrifice of Righteousness
- God will be pleased with sacrifice of burnt offerings

Notes:

Application

What was David's - a man after God's heart - attitude towards God and sin. David was a king when Nathan confronted him for his adultery and murder. He could have simply asked for forgiveness of sins in private to God and to the Prophet Nathan. Instead, David chooses to write a song about his failure, gives it to his choir master, and makes him and the congregation sing about his failure.

Would you do that?

You are not a king, nor are you holding any high political position.

Yet, we won't do what David did...

God's Holy Spirit will never leave believers

The New Testament makes it clear that once a believer is baptized by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; 11:16; 1 Corinthians 12:13) and indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5; 8:9, 11; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 6:19-20; 12:13; Gal 4:6; 1 John 3:24; 4:13), there is no reversal of that act.

Believers have been "sealed" by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). This seal guarantees their salvation and attests that the Holy Spirit's baptizing work and current indwelling in believers is permanent.

God's love is unfailing

This psalm shows the believers that God's love for them is unfailing. David writes, "*Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins*" (Psalm 51:1).

The Hebrew word used here is *רחם* 'cheched,' which can mean "love, loyal love, faithful love, unfailing kindness."

Obedience to God is what God wants

God's ways are contrary to the ways of rebels (V13). God does not want a sacrifice or burnt offering; he wants a broken spirit, a broken heart, and a

Notes:

repentant heart (V17). God therefore wants sacrifices offered in the right spirit (V19).

God wants believers to be obedient to him. He does not want believers sinning. He wants loyal and loving followers of him.

God has the power to forgive and restore

Psalm 51:12 starts out with the powerful word “restore.” David asks God to restore him [David] back to the joy of salvation (v. 12). Having his sin with Bathsheba confronted by Nathan threatened all that David had worked so hard to obtain. Because of his sin, David was likely to lose everything.

As a result of David’s sin, many bad things did happen in his house such as the rape of Tamar (2 Sam 13), Absalom’s rebellion (2 Sam 15), and many others. Yet, God forgave David and restored him back to his throne.



Notes:

Notes:

17. *Forgiveness of sin and the reflections*

Psalm 32

Circumstances: David writes this after he has had time to reflect upon the sin he had committed with Bathsheba, praising God for His endless mercy.

Scriptures: 2 Samuel 11&12

When David prays for his forgiveness to the Lord in Psalm 51, he did promise the Lord that he will teach sinners God's ways. Hence, he writes this psalm following his forgiveness of sins.

Romans 4:6-8, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: ⁷ "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; ⁸ Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin."

This is a moral and an instructive psalm.

What a way to start the joy of forgiveness when one's sin is forgiven. David expresses his physical and emotional stress. This was partly due to the guilt of sin itself, but he also mentions the chastening hand of the Lord upon him.

When David confessed his sin to the Lord, the Lord did forgive him. Instantly, David blesses God as a source of protection when one finds himself in trouble.

David ends it well by offering to instruct and teach the way one should go in their life; but with a clear caution that they shouldn't be like a mule or a horse that lacks understanding. David does contrast the sorrows of the wicked with the mercy that surround the one who puts his trust in the Lord. This ought to cause the righteous to be glad in the Lord and the upright in heart to shout for joy.

Notes:

V 1-2, The joy of forgiveness

*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered.*

*² Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no deceit.*

Blessed is a person when:

- His transgression is forgiven
- His sin is covered
- The Lord does not impute to him his iniquity

Transgression is crossing a line, defying authority

Sin is falling short of or missing a mark

Iniquity is crookedness and distortion

Guiltless is a person when:

- His sin is forgiven
- There is no deceit in his spirit

Forgiveness: the lifting of a burden or a debt

Covered: sacrificial blood covering sin

Does not impute: no bookkeeping; it does not count against

V 3-4, The curse of silence

*³ When I kept silent, my bones grew old
Through my groaning all the day long.*

*⁴ For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;
My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.*

Notes:

Selah

Effects of sin

- David remained silent
- Groaned all day long
- His bones wasting away

Correction of the Lord

- Heavy hand of the Lord was upon him all day (read Psalms 38:1-11 and 39:10-11)
- His strength is exhausted in the summer because of the heat

V 5-7, The benefit of confession

*⁵ I acknowledged my sin to You,
And my iniquity I have not hidden.
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah*

*⁶ For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You
In a time when You may be found;
Surely in a flood of great waters
They shall not come near him.*

*⁷ You are my hiding place;
You shall preserve me from trouble;
You shall surround me with songs of deliverance.*

Selah

- Acknowledges that his sin is against God
- Chose not to hide any longer
- Confessed his sin to the Lord

Notes:

- The Lord forgave his sin
- David will boldly bless the Lord
- God is his hiding place
- God will preserve him from trouble
- God will surround him with songs of deliverance
- God will be found when you are in trouble

V 8-11, The value of trust

*⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will guide you with My eye.*

*⁹ Do not be like the horse or like the mule,
Which have no understanding,
Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle,
Else they will not come near you.*

*¹⁰ Many sorrows shall be to the wicked;
But he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him.*

*¹¹ Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous;
And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!*

“Do not be like the horse or the mule,
which have no understanding but must be controlled
by bit and bridle or they will not come to you”

Psalm 32:9



Notes:

David proposes to instruct the people

- To teach them the way they should go
- To guide them with his eye
- Cautioning them to not be like a mule or horse

Value of trusting

- Many sorrows befall the wicked
- Mercy ensues the one who trusts the Lord
- Be glad in the Lord and rejoice
- Shout for joy

Application

You have never been so tensed in your life before. You have been held in custody without bail on a murder charge. The courtroom battle has dragged on for weeks and months, draining your vitality and weighing upon you with increasing anxiety. Finally, the big moment has arrived. With your hands manacled, the bailiff leads you into the courtroom. The jury files in after several days of deliberations. The courtroom falls silent as the judge calls the court to order. He asks, “Mr./Ms... , do you have a verdict?” Your heart is pounding and your mouth is dry as you watch him rise. The rest of your life depends upon his words. “Your honour, the jury finds the defendant not guilty.”

Not guilty! A flood of relief sweeps over you and tears of joy well up in your eyes. Not guilty! It’s as if a heavy weight has dropped from your shoulders! The bailiff unlocks your handcuffs and you hear the judge declare, “You are free to go.”

Freedom from condemnation!

Life suddenly takes on new meaning.

You are free from confinement, free from the constant pressure of the charges against you, free to begin a new life, because you have been released from those charges.

Notes:

Can you imagine how that might feel?



How does it feel to know that you are stuck in sin? Describe how it feels to know that you are forgiven. What would you tell your best friend who is in the midst of sin about the grace and mercy of God to change them and their situation?

Who does David say that he has sinned against when he realizes the gravity of his sin? Joseph says the same when Potiphar's wife seduced him, [Genesis 39:9](#), *There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*

Do you realise that all our sins are against God?

How does David respond to God's forgiveness of his sin? Have you ever had an opportunity to teach someone to avoid the sins that once trapped and devastated your life? If you have, how was your instruction received?

Notes:

Challenge: In moments of sin and failure, where would you go and what will you do? Will you run away from God and hide from his presence? Will you run to Him and seek forgiveness and restoration?

The message of the cross of Jesus is that we can run to God in those times when we have sinned and we can know that He is faithful to forgive us and restore us into a right relationship with him. May you run to God **NOW** and seek refuge in Him!

Commitment:

I am dealing with this sin: _____.

I will repent and pray, like David, for God to wash me clean and restore me.

Next Steps:

I understand the magnitude of sin and its devastating consequences and destructive characteristics.

I will teach others about the wages of sin and the opportunity for forgiveness (Rom 6:23).

I will praise God for his mercy and restoration.

Notes:

Notes:

Devotion: Rising & Shining as a Family

Amos 3:3, Can two people walk together without agreeing on the direction?(NLT)

One of the biggest challenges in our Christian homes in this 21st century is serving God together as family. Either the husband wants to serve and glorify God while the wife is so engrossed with home, children, finance, education etc., or it's the other way. In some cases, it's between the children and parents.

How do we 'arise' as a family?

Firstly, we need to understand that God wants us to live dependent on one another.

Ecclesiastes 4:12, *Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

The New Testament has the term 'one another' mentioned over 157 times!

Vision

Today, far too many homes are not able to work together in unity in the kingdom of God because of a lack of vision. When you lack in vision, you start lacking in understanding each other's call and the purpose in which God has brought you both together. Therefore, a common vision for the family is essential.

Think, does *your* family have a vision?

Do you have a vision statement?

I have worked with many big corporate firms, and the first thing they do while employing someone new is to make them understand the vision and the mission of the organisation. Likewise, as part of the protocol for ISO and some Japanese standards, it is a must for every employee to hold a vision and mission statement in their pocket, always.

Notes:

If you don't have a vision, I earnestly request all of you to sit together and pray and get a vision statement. Once you have a vision statement, you will be able to create a mission statement to achieve your vision



**Coming together is a beginning;
Keeping together is progress;
Working together is success.**

The Bible talks about what would ensue if there is no proper vision.

Let us look at a biblical example of a family serving together.

Aquila and Priscilla

- Aquila born in Pontus
- They lived in Rome until Claudius made Jews leave the city
- They were Jews
- They were tentmakers like Paul
- Paul stayed and worked with them

Notes:

Good leaners

Acts 18:1-4, After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth.² And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them.³ So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.⁴ And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.

Not every husband and wife can work together like this. It takes a mature relationship to work closely under the kind of pressure a job sometimes generates. But that is evidently the kind of relationship Aquila and Priscilla had. They were not only mates and lovers, they must have been good friends and companions.

Apostle Paul stayed in Corinth for about 18 months (1 Corinthians 18:11), therefore, the couple must have grown in the word of God tremendously; after all, they had the wonderful privilege of studying the word of God under one of the greatest bible teachers, Paul.

Paul took them along when he left Corinth for Ephesus. When he left for Jerusalem, they stayed back in Ephesus and preached the word to Apollos.

Discipling and teaching others

Acts 18:24-28, Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus.²⁵ This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John.²⁶ So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.²⁷ And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace;²⁸ for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

Notes:

Luke literally describes Apollos as a “man of words.” This indicates that Apollos was well-read, well-educated, and trained in rhetoric. Luke portrays him as both an eloquent orator and as someone with a thorough understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures. Apollos would later go on to become an outstanding minister of the gospel.

An effective work on Apollos

- Invited him to their home
- Explained to him the whole picture
- Gave him more accurate information
- Apollos didn’t need correction – it wasn’t that he was wrong
- He needed the rest of the story

Evidently, their mentoring ministry had a positive effect on the life of Apollos.

- Got the approval of local believers when they wrote him a letter of reference to take with him to the next town
- Was a great help to the believers
- Vigorously refuted Jews in public debate
- Proved to others that Jesus was the Messiah

A self-sacrificing life

Romans 16:3-4, Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentile.

- They were fellow workers in Christ Jesus
- They risked their lives
- The churches were grateful to them

Notes:

They opened their home

Romans 16:5, Likewise greet the church that is in their house.

1 Corinthians 16:19, The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

The various places where this couple had lived:

- Rome (Acts 18:2)
- Corinth (Acts 18:2)
- Ephesus (Acts 18:19)
- Rome again (Romans 16:3)

Application

The names of Aquila and Priscilla have been mentioned in the bible six times, with 'Aquila' cited first three times and 'Priscilla' cited first three times. This shows the equal partnership in their ministry.

Acts 18:2, And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them.

Acts 18:18, So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow.

Acts 18:26, So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

Romans 16:3, Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

1 Corinthians 16:19, The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

Notes:

2 Timothy 4:19, Greet Priscilla and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.

Therefore, embrace and look after each other.

What kinds of people can families today begin a mentoring relationship with?

- College students away from home
- Grandkids, nephews, nieces
- Young couples
- Foreign students
- Through correspondence (e-mail, snail mail) to young ministers, missionaries
- Families who are young in their Christian faith

Vision statements

Examples

- We love, create, and protect family time, both one-one and everyone together.
- We talk about our needs, thoughts and feelings, and we carefully listen to each other.
- We treat each other with respect, patience, and kindness.
- We speak and act in a way that allows the Spirit to be with us.
- We nurture, support, and celebrate each other's ambitions, dreams and missions.
- We are always honest and do the right thing even when no one is looking.
- We courageously commit to public virtue.
- We know that God loves us and we are wonderful and amazing!
- We build our knowledge, skills, and attitudes of self-reliance and freedom.
- We make everything around us better and more beautiful.
- We build others up through service, sharing and love.
- We protect our home and the Spirit dwells here.
- We learn, live, and share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Notes:

➤ Love is our compass and our anchor.

Mission Statements

Inward: Understand how much you need God

Upward: Experience the love of God

Outward: Look at the opportunity

Onward: Plan and execute

Examples:

We, the _____, believe that our purpose as a family is to [general mission statement]. We will accomplish this by:

Valuing _____ and _____ as our main guiding principles

Making our home a place of _____, _____, _____, and _____.

Prioritizing _____ above lesser values

Interacting with each other in a spirit of _____

Notes:

Notes:

18. When you are being chased by your own, left with nothing and running for life...

Psalms 4 & 5

Also Psalms 42, 43 & 55

Circumstances: David runs away for his life with his wife and children from his own son Absalom.

Scriptures: 2 Samuel 17

Psalm 4 Sung in the evening

King David's son Absalom tries to kill David because he wants to become king. David runs from his palace for his life once again. David prays to God, "*Show my enemies that you are fighting for me.*" God answers David and makes him very happy, that David could sleep in peace. The peace that God gives makes us not feel afraid deep down inside us.

V 1-2, Prayer to God

V 3-4, Mind voice to enemies

V 5-8, God gives joy

V 1-2, Prayer to God

Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness!

You have relieved me in my distress;

Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

² How long, O you sons of men,

Will you turn my glory to shame?

How long will you love worthlessness

And seek falsehood?

Notes:

Selah

David asks God for help. He tells God what he wanted to say to his enemies. But he really wants God to tell them. David wanted to say to them, "you cannot win" because the enemies of David were fighting God. Their idea of having David killed and Absalom be made king was very foolish.

V 3-4, Mind voice to enemies

³ But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly;

The LORD will hear when I call to Him.

⁴ Be angry, and do not sin.

Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still.

Selah

David gives more reasons to his enemies as to why they cannot win against him.

- LORD chose David as king
- LORD did not choose Absalom
- LORD made David different from his enemies
- LORD will listen to David and answer him

This will make the enemies of David angry. They can argue in their thoughts and must not speak their ideas aloud.

V 5-8, God gives joy

⁵ Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,

And put your trust in the LORD.

⁶ There are many who say,

"Who will show us any good?"

LORD, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.

⁷ You have put gladness in my heart,

More than in the season that their grain and wine increased.

Notes:

*8 I will both lie down in peace, and sleep;
For You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.*

David knew the value of religious fulfillment; yet, he also knew that this could not replace the trust in the Lord. The voice of the ungodly doubter echoes in David's ear. After continual disappointment from man, one begins to doubt if God will show us any good. Though David was in distress, vexed by ungodly men all around, he could still have gladness in his heart because the LORD put it there.

David can sleep well at night, even in distressing times surrounded by the enemies who are chasing him for his life. Yet, he sleeps well because his safety is from the LORD, not from circumstances or even feelings.

Psalm 5 Sung in the Morning

“Criticism is the manure in which God’s servants grow best.”



Notes:

When you are under attack

V 1-3, Pray to God

V 4-6, Appeal to God

V 7-8, Draw near to God

V 9-10, Appeal to God

V 11-12, Take a joyful refuge in God

V 1-3, Pray to God

Give ear to my words, O LORD,

Consider my meditation.

² Give heed to the voice of my cry,

My King and my God,

For to You I will pray.

³ My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD;

In the morning I will direct it to You,

And I will look up.

a) Pray to God honestly

These prayers are not the politically careful words of a man who is trying to project that he has it all together. Rather, they are the honest groans and cries of a man in great need. David was making it very plain that he is in trouble and he needs help.

b) Pray personally

David addresses God as “*my King and my God*”. Even though David was the king, he knew that he only served under a far greater King, the Lord God.

Notes:

c) *Pray persistently*

Twice David says that he will pray “in the morning”. The previous psalm was sung in the evening. David’s first thought on waking was about the threats of these evil enemies. So he immediately turned those thoughts into prayer.

d) *Pray expectantly*

David says that he will wait in expectation for an answer to his prayer, “waiting eagerly.”

V 4-6, Appeal to God

*⁴ For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness,
Nor shall evil dwell with You.*

*⁵ The boastful shall not stand in Your sight;
You hate all workers of iniquity.*

*⁶ You shall destroy those who speak falsehood;
The LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.*

Here, David reasons that since his enemies are so evil, surely God, the righteous one, will act on his behalf. So David reviews God’s righteousness to encourage himself with the truth that God will set right all the wrong things.

Notice how strong the Lord is against those who sin:

- God takes no pleasure in evil (5:4)
- God cannot dwell with the wicked (5:4)
- God cannot have in His presence the arrogant (5:5)
- God hates those who do wrong (5:5)
- God destroys those who tell lies (5:6)
- God abhors bloodthirsty and deceitful men (5:6)

Notes:

V 7-8, Draw near to God

*⁷ But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy;
In fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple.*

*⁸ Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness because of my enemies;
Make Your way straight before my face.*

David knew and spoke about God's absolute hatred of sin and His holiness. Therefore, he realized that he could never approach God on the basis of his own righteousness. Hence, he acknowledges that the only way he can enter God's house is by His abundant loving kindness.

David's prayer isn't just that God would protect him from the wicked, but also that God would protect him from becoming like them. David's critics would have loved to see him stumble, so that they could have more ammunition to throw at him.

V 9-10, Appeal to God

⁹ For there is no faithfulness in their mouth;

Their inward part is destruction;

Their throat is an open tomb;

They flatter with their tongue.

¹⁰ Pronounce them guilty, O God!

Let them fall by their own counsels;

Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions,

For they have rebelled against You.

David describes the evil of his attackers and asks God to judge them. He begins by stating that none of their words can be trusted.

- Why do we listen to the counsel of sinners and the advice of the ungodly?
- Why do we think that they can help us with life's decisions better than God?

Notes:

- Their throat is an open grave and all who follow their words will make their grave.

V 11-12, God, a joyful refuge

*11 But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You;
Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them;
Let those also who love Your name
Be joyful in You.*

*12 For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous;
With favour You will surround him as with a shield.*

David extends the application from himself to all of God's people who may be under attack. When righteous people approach the Lord, they will find the Lord as their refuge. When we go to God for protection, we will not be turned away and left to defend ourselves. When we approach God with the proper spirit and holy hands, we will find gladness and joy.

David says that the believer can be joyful even when under attack because the shield of God's favour surrounds him.

Conclusion

When you're under attack:

- Take refuge in the Lord through prayer.
- Appeal to Him as the Righteous Judge.
- Draw near to Him by His grace,
- Rejoice in Him as your defender.

Notes:

Jesus Christ

Jesus knew that He was going to go to the cross and He predicted Judas' betrayal. At that moment, He goes to God in prayer.

Matthew 27:36, Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there."

God then strengthens Him to go through the trial.

Luke 22:42-43, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." ⁴³ Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

Apostle Paul

After Apostle Paul was warned that he would be bound if he goes to Jerusalem, he didn't waver in his commitment.

Acts 20:24, But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

- The Apostle Paul was not moved by a shipwreck.
- He was not moved while being beaten and whipped for no good reason.
- He was not moved while being imprisoned.
- He was not moved while being persecuted.
- He was not moved while being publicly humiliated.
- He was not moved by the criticism of people with less education and knowledge.
- He was not moved when a snake wrapped itself around his hand.
- He was not moved when he was falsely accused.
- He was not moved by his physical infirmity once the Lord said He was in it.
- He was not moved by the doubts of or disappointment with those with whom he worked even though his heart was grieved for them.

Notes:

There was only one thing and one thing only that moved the Apostle Paul. .. and that was completing his assignment with joy. . .doing the thing that God called him to do.

Application



Whatever trials God sends into our lives are to cause us to turn to Him in honest, personal, persistent prayer. Who is the **first person** you go to when facing a trial?

- Your spouse
- Your pastor
- Your cell group leader
- A brother/sister in Christ
- Or God?

Notes:

Some Christians allow the attacks of others to drive them away from the Lord, whereas for some it drives them to the Lord. What makes the difference?

Should Christians take pleasure or be grieved at the thought of God judging their enemies? How does it reflect upon us in the light of Revelation 18:20?

Revelation 18:20, Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!"

How can we know whether to defend ourselves before critics or to just ignore them? What biblical principles apply?

Notes:

19. *You have won a victory over your own son by getting him killed ... do you call this victory or a sad day...*

Psalm 144

Circumstances: The victory over Absalom.

Scriptures: 2 Samuel 15 to 18

V 1-2, David praises God for His political successes.

V 3-4, David confesses his own unworthiness.

V 5-6, He prays to God to smash his enemies.

V 7-8, He prays for deliverance from hypocrites near him.

V 9-10, He promises to creatively praise God for His works.

V 11, He prays again to be saved from hypocrites near him.

V 12-14, He lists blessings of family, economy, production, and safety.

V 15, He summarises all as God's blessing, but exalts God Himself.



Notes:

David opens this glorious psalm about his reign over God's nation by blessing the LORD. The psalm ends with the LORD as God, so we make Him our God by trusting His strength.

V 1-2, David praises God for his political successes.

*Blessed be the LORD my Rock,
Who trains my hands for war,
And my fingers for battle—
2 My loving kindness and my fortress,
My high tower and my deliverer,
My shield and the One in whom I take refuge,
Who subdues my people under me.*

David was known as a mighty man of valour from the earliest of days, which was all due to God. Though a man of war, he was a gentle lover of peace ... a psalmist, musician, and dancer. David continued by praising the LORD for all the ways in which He had provided for him.

David made the LORD God as his

- Fortress,
- High tower,
- Deliverer, and
- Shield – providing all protection and safety against his enemies.

V 3-4, David confesses his own unworthiness.

*3 LORD, what is man, that You take knowledge of him?
Or the son of man, that You are mindful of him?
4 Man is like a breath;
His days are like a passing shadow.*

David makes a strong point about his own unworthiness. Although he was a king, accomplished in many respects, he knew he was nothing at all. The lives

Notes:

of men are so brief, one generation comes, and another leaves; man is insignificant.

V 5-6, He prays to God to smash his enemies.

⁵ Bow down Your heavens, O LORD, and come down;

Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.

⁶ Flash forth lightning and scatter them;

Shoot out Your arrows and destroy them.

Mount Sinai was an event Israel and its prophets often remembered for God's grand display. David did not seek a fireworks display against mountains, but for God to destroy his enemies. He uses a metaphor of thunderous display of a storm for God slaughtering his enemies. In these two verses, he does not even make a mention of his own military means or preparations!

V 7-8, He prays for deliverance from hypocrites near him.

⁷ Stretch out Your hand from above;

Rescue me and deliver me out of great waters,

From the hand of foreigners,

⁸ Whose mouth speaks lying words,

And whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

David now calls upon the Lord for direct intervention in a matter compared to great waters:

- The treachery of those close friends as a terrible calamity
- An unfaithful man in a time of trouble is a dysfunctional pain
- That the Philistine mercenaries were more loyal than his own son
- The Philistine king of Gath, treated David far better than did King Saul of Israel
- The Jews of Ziph, who betrayed him twice, as strangers

Notes:

Men close to David whose speech he sought to trust, while their words were vanity. David describes that they spoke smooth words but war was in their hearts.

V 9-10, He promises to creatively praise God for His works.

*⁹ I will sing a new song to You, O God;
On a harp of ten strings I will sing praises to You,
¹⁰ The One who gives salvation to kings,
Who delivers David His servant
From the deadly sword.*

In light of God's deliverances from his enemies, praise is the obvious response for the upright. David did not take any of the credit for his accomplishments to himself. God did great things for David; certainly, it should provoke songs and it did!

V 11, He prays again to be saved from hypocrites near him.

*¹¹ Rescue me and deliver me from the hand of foreigners,
Whose mouth speaks lying words,
And whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood—*

The prayer again repeats from verses 7-8. David describes that internal enemies are the major problem, like Saul and Absalom!

V 12-14, He lists blessings of family, economy, production, and safety.

*¹² That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth;
That our daughters may be as pillars,
Sculptured in palace style;
¹³ That our barns may be full,
Supplying all kinds of produce;
That our sheep may bring forth thousands
And ten thousands in our fields;*

Notes:

*14 That our oxen may be well laden;
That there be no breaking in or going out;
That there be no outcry in our streets.*

Here is a poetic description of happy and prospering families identified by their children. David describes that economic prosperity is measured by farming, with a full supply of all desirable commodities and a high return on investments.

Oxen labouring are the means of production; a strong labour is blessed productivity.

- No breaking in - safety from thieves breaking in to steal or enemies breaking into the city.
- No going out - safety from being forced to flee a city for danger or taken away captive.
- No complaining in our streets - domestic calmness from all internal conflicts or wants.

V 15, He summarises all as God's blessing, but exalts God Himself.

*15 Happy are the people who are in such a state;
Happy are the people whose God is the LORD!*

What a glorious way to end this song showing that his priority is the Lord, nothing else, focussing not on the blessings but the blesser Himself!

Application

As a brother, sister, pastor, or father, there is but one place to put your trust - in the LORD Himself. And by putting your trust in LORD, you can secure perfect peace for yourself and those with you (Isaiah 26:3-4).

Do you enjoy such peace? If not, check where your trust is?

Notes:

Though David was a king, accomplished in many respects, yet he knew he was nothing at all in front of God. We must have this attitude as men, women, families, and church before the Lord.

Do you boast in your accomplishments or in the LORD?

Though we are insignificant in the eyes of the Lord, yet God's grace and blessings in our lives are what makes us gloriously significant. It is our duty and wisdom to humble ourselves as men, families, and church before God.

Do we humble ourselves to show the glory of God in our daily lives?

The churches of the Lord Jesus Christ have often had to deal with false brethren among them.

- Consider that in the small group of twelve apostles, there was a religious devil – Judas.
- Consider the troubles Apostle Paul had with false brethren (2 Corinthians 11:26; Galatians 2:4; Philippians 1:15-17).
- The Lord Jesus Christ promised to send heresies to identify those He approves (I Corinthians 11:19).
- These brethren are eventually seen by departing from the faith (I John 2:19; Jude 1:19).

How do you deal with the false accusation from fellow brothers/sisters?

Notes:



'It's been reported that you have a serious drink problem'

Singing is an important part of our church and our fellowships because it is exalted in both testaments. A man or woman with the Spirit of God will delight in singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

Let us sing to the Lord irrespective of our circumstances.

Notes:

Notes:

20. When you look up and see God and know how insignificant you are ...

Psalm 8

Circumstances: Praising God.

Scriptures: 2 Samuel 22:1-51

A song of delight from King David. In other words, this psalm flows out from an astronomer looking into the night sky and singing praises to God.

The psalm begins with praising God for His excellent name and His glory in the earth and above the heavens. God's glory is illustrated in the way He is able to use "babes" and "infants" to silence the enemy and the avenger.

David's praise appears to have been sparked by comparing the work of God in the heavens with the seeming insignificance of man on the earth. Amazed that God would even be mindful of man, David notes that God created man a little lower than the angels, and even set man over the works of His hands, including the animals, birds, and fish.

The psalm ends the way it begins, praising the excellence of God's name in all the earth, which is the proper response of His creation, especially man.

V 1-2, God's majesty in creation

V 3-8, Man's dignity over creation

V 9, Man's response

V 1-2, God's majesty in creation

*O LORD, our Lord,
How excellent is Your name in all the earth,
Who have set Your glory above the heavens!*

Notes:

*² Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants
You have ordained strength,
Because of Your enemies,
That You may silence the enemy and the avenger.*

- His name exalted in all the earth
- His glory set above the heavens
- Able to ordain strength from the mouths of babes and infants
- And thereby silence the enemy and the avenger

V 3-8, Man's dignity over creation

*³ When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,
⁴ What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him?*

*⁵ For You have made him a little lower than the angels,
And You have crowned him with glory and honour.*

*⁶ You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands;
You have put all things under his feet,*

*⁷ All sheep and oxen—
Even the beasts of the field,*

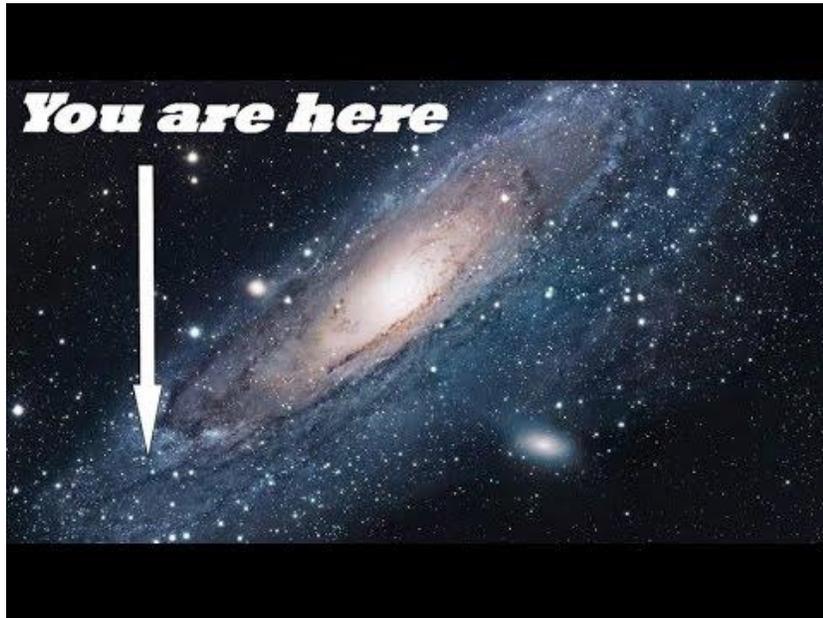
*⁸ The birds of the air,
And the fish of the sea*

That pass through the paths of the seas.

Notes:

a) Man's insignificance

- Contrast to heavens, the moon and stars
- Amazed yet God would consider man
- Not only consider but care for him



b) Man's exaltation

- Made little lower than angels
- Crowned with glory and honour
- Given dominion over the works of God
- All things placed under his feet
 - Sheep
 - Oxen
 - Beast of the field
 - Birds of the air
 - Fish of the sea

Notes:

V 9, Man's response

⁹O LORD, our Lord,

How excellent is Your name in all the earth!

- To praise God for His excellent Name in all the earth

David becomes a king of Israel, yet he does not think high of himself but looks up to the heaven and feels how insignificant he is when he compared to God's creations.

Application

Do you see the majesty of God in the creation?

Do you see the majesty of God in you?

David was able to praise God all through his life both at high times or low. His focus was always on God... do you feel the same way?

What prompted David's amazement over God's concern for man?

Who now has all authority over heaven and earth? (Hebrews 2:9; Matthew 28:19; Ephesians 1:20-22; 1 Peter 3:22)

Jesus Christ, who became man and through the suffering of death, has been crowned with glory and honour. He is now head over all things. That Jesus lives inside of you!

Do you see yourself in this light?

Notes:

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