

## Sermon Notes

# WORSHIP SERVICE - 9.1.2024

## PSALM 56 - IN GOD I TRUST

### I. INTRODUCTION

- Psalm 56, was written by David, during the time he fled from Saul and the Philistines seized him in Gath.
- The account of that is found 1 Samuel 21.
- We're all tempted to fear in pressure-filled times, and what we'll learn from this psalm is to draw comfort from our trust in the Lord and his Word.
- We can have confidence to have faith in God in the face of fear.

### **Psalm 56**

1 Be gracious to me, O God, for man tramples on me;

all day long an attacker oppresses me;

2 my enemies trample on me all day long,

for many attack me proudly.

3 When I am afraid,

I put my trust in you.

4 In God, whose word I praise,

in God I trust; I shall not be afraid.

What can flesh do to me?

5 All day long they injure my cause;

all their thoughts are against me for evil.

6 They stir up strife, they lurk;

they watch my steps,

as they have waited for my life.

7 For their crime will they escape?

In wrath cast down the peoples, O God!

8 You have kept count of my tossings;

put my tears in your bottle.

Are they not in your book?

**9** Then my enemies will turn back

in the day when I call.

This I know, that God is for me.

**10** In God, whose word I praise,

in the Lord, whose word I praise,

**11** in God I trust; I shall not be afraid.

What can man do to me?

**12** I must perform my vows to you, O God;

I will render thank offerings to you.

**13** For you have delivered my soul from death,

yes, my feet from falling,

that I may walk before God

in the light of life.

- This psalm is one of lament and prayer, as David calls out for God to deliver as he draws comfort from his confidence and trust in the Lord.
- He feels like he is being trampled by his enemies.
- You can feel the tug of war in David's heart between faith and fear.
- We've all likely experienced that same tug of war in our own hearts.

## II. PRESSURE AND PROMISE

- The psalm opens up with David casting himself upon the grace and mercy of God.
- "Be gracious to me, O God..."
- The anointed king cannot rescue himself so he does the only thing he knows to do, fling himself upon the mercies of God.
- He's under pressure. He's experiencing intense, unrelenting pressure from those who seek his life.
- Notice the repeated verb, "trample."
- And notice the repeated phrase, "all day long."
- At every turn, David feels his many enemies pressing him and squeezing him, ready to crush him into submission.
  
- Have you ever felt unceasing, intensifying pressure in your life?
- In those moments we may be tempted to fear.
- That's a natural, emotional response to these kinds of intense situations.
- But what does that fear drive you towards?
  
- David was afraid. V3 When I am afraid... is literally, "the day I am afraid"
- He is feeling pressure all day long from his adversaries.
- But he doesn't give in to his fear.
- The fear drives David to trust in God.
- "When I am afraid, I put my trust in you."

- John Calvin, Commentary on the Book of Psalms, Vol.2, *“The true proof of faith consists in this, that when we feel the solicitations of natural fear, we can resist them, and prevent them from obtaining an undue ascendancy. Fear and hope may seem opposite and incompatible affections, yet it is proved by observation, that the latter never comes into full sway unless there exists some measure of the former.”*
  - When all is going well, when we are at ease in life, when there is no pressure upon us, there is little need to exercise faith and trust in God.
  - It’s only when we’re feeling pressed and tempted to fear; that in the moment that we exercise our confidence in the Lord, is when we experience the quieting of our soul.
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- Charles Spurgeon, Treasury of David, *“The condition of the psalmist’s mind was complex—he feared, but that fear did not fill the whole area of his mind... It is possible, then, for fear and faith to occupy the mind at the same moment. We are strange beings, and our experience in the divine life is stranger still. We are often in a twilight, where light and darkness are both present and it is hard to tell which predominates. It is a blessed fear which drives us to trust. Unregenerate fear drives from God, gracious fear drives to him.”*
  - For the child of God, faith is a deliberate act of trusting in God in defiance of one’s emotional state.
  - Fear should drive us to God, to confidence and trust in the grace and mercy of God for his children.
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- In v4, David lays out the reason he trusts God, a phrase he repeats in 10-11.
  - Here is the ground of his hope—the Word of God.
  - “In God, whose word I praise...”
  - Praise means to publicly boast about something.
  - He is praising the Word of God, no doubt he means all of Scripture, but especially, the promise of God to David.
  - God hasn’t failed David.
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- The powerful refrain of the psalm is this: “In God I trust, I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?”
  - He is afraid—but, he’s not afraid—when he trusts in the Lord.
  - The concluding rhetorical question, What can flesh, what can man do to me?—the answer is nothing!
  - Nothing apart from what the sovereign God permits.
  - Man is absolutely powerless to do anything that would hinder God’s eternal purposes in David’s life.
  - David expresses faith in defiance of fear!
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- In the psalm, David describes what the wicked are doing against him.
  - They twist his words, which is what is meant by the phrase, “All day long they injure my cause.”
  - “All their thoughts are against me for evil.”
  - They foment trouble, they stir up strife.
  - They “lurk” hiding in the shadows, watching and waiting for David to slip up, to ambush him and then move in for the kill.
  - It’s a reminder that the faith David expressed is lived out in the midst of ongoing trials.
  - The pressure has not let up. It’s the same for all who are in Christ, our faith is lived out in the midst of ongoing trials and troubles.
  - We will face unrelenting pressure from the world, the flesh, and the devil.
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- V7, David prays that God will execute judgment on these mortal men who are in reality, defying God by persecuting his anointed king.
  - They think they’re going to get away with what they’re doing.

- But they won't get away with it.
- David's petition is for God to act in his righteous wrath to cast them down so they won't get away with anything. There is no escaping God's judgment.

### III. THE PROTECTOR'S CARE

- The three lines of v8-9 are the heart of this psalm.
  - David expresses and affirms that all of his sorrows and woes are exceedingly precious to God.
  - "You have kept count of my tossings...:
  - Tossings means 'wanderings.' God is intimately aware of all of his wanderings.
  - David knows God sees and cares about him.
  - He abruptly prays, "Put my tears in your bottle."
  - The NIV translates this as "List my tears on your scroll."
  - God had preserved David's tears. Not a single tear that rolled from David's cheek fell to the ground without God taking it into account.
  - "Are they not in your book?"
  - The point is simply that God is aware of what we feel and how we suffer, and he keeps accurate records of all of it.
  - Every sorrowing tear of God's anointed king is recorded, one by one, with careful love, in God's book.
  - Isaiah 38:5 "Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears.
  - Our suffering and our sorrows are of great value to the loving heart of the Father.
- David's confidence is that, "in the day when I call," he will be heard.
  - His enemies will be turned back, they will be defeated, their plans will come to nothing.
  - He confidently asserts, "This is I know, that God is for me."
  - David repeats the refrain from v4 in vv10-11, but this time he adds "in the Lord," the covenant name of God, Yahweh.
  - He's expressing trust in the word of the covenant promise to the Messiah, and this leads David out of his fear into the faith filled future God has for him.
  - "What can man do to me?" Nothing
- David closes this psalm with thanksgiving.
  - He's in a tough place but he knows that he will be delivered.
  - And so he resolved, even now, to offer a sacrifice of praise.
  - He will worship as he promised and he will render his thanksgiving offerings to the Lord.
  - This is a further expression of faith in God—he anticipates his deliverance.
  - V13, For you have delivered my soul from death...
  - That hasn't happened yet, but he sees it through the eye of faith. He trusts in the covenant promises.
- David's enemies were watching and waiting for David to stumble, but the Lord will keep his feet from falling, he won't allow David to stumble.
  - God will cause David to walk before him in the light of life.

### IV. REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

- As we have seen with all of the psalms we have to interpret them in light of their ultimate fulfillment in Christ.

- The sufferings David experienced, the oppression, the persecution, the troubles, all anticipated the sufferings of Christ.
  - The opposition to David found its typological fulfillment in the opposition to Jesus.
  - Jesus encountered unrelenting pressure from his adversaries.
  - Luke 11:53-54 As he went away from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard and to provoke him to speak about many things, 54 lying in wait for him, to catch him in something he might say.
  - Take note of the parallel between what David experienced and what our Lord experienced.
  - David, the anointed king, was rejected and persecuted by the establishment, and Jesus, the Lord's anointed King, was rejected and persecuted by the establishment.
  - They were pressing him hard, trampling him, seeking to crush him.
  - They were provoking him to speak about many things, not because they wanted to hear what he had to say, but in order to twist his words and misrepresent him.
  - They were lying in wait for him, trying to catch him in something he might say, just like David's enemies were lurking and watching his steps.
- So it is with the people of God today.
  - Christ's Church will feel the overflow of this pressure until Christ returns.
  - We are at war!
  - Revelation 12:17 Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.
  - Ephesians 6:11-12 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
  - We should never be surprised by the hostility of the world—we don't belong to this present world system.
  - Every believer must remember to keep a war footing.
- This is why it's so important for you to know the Word of God, to hide it in your heart and to memorize it.
  - God's Word contains the promises of God secured for us by Christ.
  - When you're tempted to fear, look to His Word—proclaim his Word-promises.
  - When David expressed "What can man do to me? He knew the answer was nothing because of God's promise concerning the divine-human Messiah.
  - We can trust God because every promise in Christ is fulfilled.
  - 2 Corinthians 1:20-22 For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. 21 And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, 22 and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.
- 2 Co 4:8-11 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.
- And we know the enemies of the cross, our Adversary, will not get away with it.

- There will be a final judgment and all of Christ's enemies will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20)
- David's confidence and trust was that God would cause him to walk before God in the light of life.
- That is what we've been promised in Christ.
- John 6:39-40 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."
- This is the glorious punchline of Psalm 56:13. Because Jesus walks with the Father in the light of resurrection life, David, and all who are in Christ, will also walk in the light of resurrection life on that Day.
- David affirmed God's loving care over him in his wanderings and sufferings and tears.
- The wanderings and tears and sufferings of our Lord are of infinite value to the heart of the Father.
- Hebrews 5:7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.
- The Father collected every one of Jesus's tears, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, expressing full confidence that he would be delivered from death, and that his prayers would be heard and answered.
- John 17:24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.
- We can confidently say like David, "*This is I know, that God is for me.*"
- We know that is true because God was for his Christ, and all who belong to Christ may know that God is for them.
- Romans 8:31-32 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be[i] against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?
- Our trials and troubles and pressures will cause us to fear.
- But take heart saint of God—the word of promise in Christ settles our troubled soul—it strengthens weak courage—and fills our heart with faith.
- Proclaim his promises. Let them stir faith in your heart.
- God is faithful and he will do everything he has promised to do.
- Not one of your tears will fall without God accomplishing his divine purposes in your life.
- God will keep his word and we can trust that he who began a good work in us, is faithful to bring it to completion at the Day of Jesus Christ (Phil 1:6).
- So pray in your sorrow, pray in pressure-filled times, your heavenly Father will catch every tear before even one reaches the ground.
- Be assured that he will hear you just as he heard the prayers of his Christ.
- And you can confidently say in the face of fear, "In God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

## **APPLICATION AND REFLECTION**

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?

- With whom can I share the gospel this week?