

In God Alone My Hope is Found

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[0 : 0 0] Heavenly Father, please sanctify us by the truth. Your word is the truth through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen. Please be seated. Jackie is married to a Christian husband, but he works long hours, too long, and he is emotionally distant and disengaged toward his wife.

And so after 15 years of marriage, Jackie is lonely and she's hurting. She meditates continually on the better husbands that other Christian wives have out there and how they have more intimacy that she longs for, and she meditates on how she's missing out.

She's so envious of some of the other wives at church that she stops coming to church. One day, a male colleague at work shows real interest in her.

He listens to her, asks her questions about how she's going. He buys her a coffee. Six months later, the colleague has become a friend. Six months later from that, she follows her heart and they're having an affair.

[1 : 1 7] And six months later, she's left her husband and her Christian faith. John is lying on a bed in a hospital, about to go into the operating theatre.

John is having surgery for a work-related injury and there's a small chance he will die from the surgery. He will certainly be physically impaired for the rest of his retirement, which has been forced on him because of the illness.

And as he lies waiting for the anaesthetist to come, he meditates on what went wrong, on the people who are responsible for his unsafe workplace, the foremen who were cutting corners, the managers who should have known better.

He meditates on the colleagues of his who did the same job but didn't get sick. Why should that happen to him and not them? As he waits for his surgery, he bitterly meditates on the retirement he should be having.

His minister visits him and offers to pray with him and his minister encourages him but it's like John doesn't hear because he's so enveloped in his bitterness.

[2 : 3 6] One last person, David. David is a gifted school teacher in a public high school. David is an enthusiastic Christian. He can hardly actually afford to support his family and mortgage on a single public school teacher's wage but he loves the job and he works hard and he's excellent at it.

And he started a Christian Bible study for students who are interested one lunchtime a week but over time he is ostracised from the other staff for his open Christian faith in a public school.

The politics of the school work against him. People are annoyed with him in part actually because he's a popular teacher with the students. Several false rumours and complaints are made about him and there is talk that if there are cuts made to the school budget David will be the first to go.

So he pulls his head in and gives up his lunchtime group and stops talking about his Christian faith in the school. In a few years the students don't even know that he's a Christian and he plays the unethical politics of the school and makes his way up the ladder.

Well in those three examples I hope you are thinking with me what's going on in those people's lives that makes Christians give up their faith, commit adultery, walk away from marriages, rejoice in bitterness, compromise their passion for the gospel.

[4 : 11] What are people thinking when they do those sorts of things? And you will know people who have done those sorts of things I'm sure who are Christians and maybe are no longer practising their faith.

What you think determines where you go. What goes in your heart and your head it's completely secret between you and God but it determines everything.

Today we have a real gift from God because what God is giving us today is a window inside the inner thoughts of a very godly man of God, King David in Psalm 62.

So it's a privilege to have a psalm like this where we get to see inside the thoughts of a man of God under pressure. David, I love King David, he's amazing.

I mean he's a warrior, soldier, king. He's a psalm writer, poet, man of God and he suffered a lot for his God. He suffered a lot.

[5 : 11] Many people out to get him and so this is a great psalm to look into his heart. As we read the psalm I invite you to think about what are the words that you say to yourself?

What do you focus on in your heart when you're under pressure? What recordings are going on in your mind? And listen to David's own heart and what he focuses on in his suffering.

He starts off with God. It's all about God. Verse 1, For God alone my soul waits in silence. From him comes my salvation.

The first battle of the heart is to focus not on yourself but on God. That's the first battle to actually decide I'm going to think about God.

I'm going to meditate about God. I'm going to not meditate on my predicament or my enemies or my situation or what I don't have. I'm going to focus on God. And so he says, For God alone my soul waits in silence.

[6 : 15] He's waiting quietly on God for help. It's not a total silence actually because later in the psalm, verse 8 he says, Pour out your heart to God.

And the whole psalm is him pouring out his heart to God, not in silence but actually in words. I think the silence is his godly resignation to submit to the will of God, to bow to the sovereignty of God.

He's going to silence the murmuring in his heart. He's going to not express that dissatisfaction but rather just wait on his God and appeal to God alone.

God who is his rock. From him, from God alone, comes his salvation. This is a really great principle. The scripture is that God proves to you and me that he can be trusted because he has saved us.

Think about the giving of Jesus to us. Here is a promise from the New Testament. If God is for us, who is against us? Because he did not withhold his only son but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him give us everything else?

[7 : 23] If God has given us the son, he has proven that he is trustworthy. He's proven that he will give us all things. And so David says, from God alone is my salvation.

Therefore, I will focus on him. I will trust him. Goes on, he alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress. I shall never be shaken.

Great confidence David has in his hardship, in his trial, in his testing that he will not be shaken. I think whenever we are in suffering, there are always going to be some ways out or some consolations that aren't in God and we are to resist them.

We're always going to be tempted to try and take things in our own hands, to seek revenge or at least to meditate on the revenge we would give if we were going to give revenge and somehow we feel better just from thinking about that.

But David says, no, God is my rock. God is my salvation. God is my fortress. See, he focuses on God and leaves God to be the deliverer, not himself.

[8 : 34] Some people, I think, when they're anxious and they're under a burden of pain or emotional pain, they seek consolation in, say, getting drunk or some people view pornography only when they're depressed because it sort of gives us quick consolation.

Some people indulge in wasteful shopping. Some people flirt with strangers just for the rush and some people just gripe endlessly like a broken record about their pain.

But David says, in God alone is consolation. He alone is my rock, my salvation, my fortress. It's not just that we say God is a giver of security or God is a giver of salvation.

David says, no, no, God is salvation. God is security. You see, we find security by seeking God, by searching out God, by expressing our dependence continually in prayer to God.

Security is not something that God gives us and then we can kind of forget him. He is our security. He is David's security. And with God, David can confidently claim, I shall never be shaken.

[9 : 52] I mean, who can say that? I can't say that. Where does David's strength come from? Is it just sort of brave, kind of blokey talk, but inwardly he's hurting?

Or does David have some amazing inner strength that kings have, that we don't have? I actually think David's strength comes from without, doesn't it?

It comes from his God and therefore it's available to us. In fact, David lets us know that inwardly he's shaking in verse 3 and 4. Firstly, he cries out to his enemies, how long will you assail a person?

How long will you batter your victim, all of you, as you would a leaning wall, a tottering fence? That's probably he's talking about himself. He feels like he's a leaning wall. He feels fragile.

He feels vulnerable to his enemies who are going after him. And so he's sort of yelling at them in verse 3, getting angry at them. In verse 4, he yells at God. God, their only plan is to bring down a person of prominence.

[10 : 52] That is me, he says, I'm the king. They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse. They're hypocrites. David is angry at his enemies and he's telling God that he feels vulnerable.

They're going to tip me over. I'm a shaking wall. I'm about to crash. Do something, God, against them. Very interestingly though, David pulls himself up.

He corrects himself. And then in verse 5, he goes back to God. And so for a moment, yes, he does meditate and plead with God for justice.

But then he thinks, you know, it's like he thinks that itself is a dead end. I need to go back to God. So in verse 5, he stops himself and brings himself back. For God alone, my soul waits in silence.

For my hope is from him. So he starts in verse 1. For God alone, my soul waits in silence. Three and four, angry at his enemies. Angry, angry, angry. And then hang on, back to God.

[11 : 53] Focus back on God. Verse 6, he alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress. I shall not be shaken. On God rests my deliverance and my honour.

My mighty rock, my refuge is in God. It's not that there isn't a place to be angry and express your anger about your enemies. And David at times had to take on his enemies.

But it can't be the focus. It can't be the centre. God must be the centre. And it's a very dark path, I think, if we're going to meditate continually on those who have done us wrong or the injustice of our predicament or whatever or our broken dreams.

We must focus on God. So friends, let me ask you, you know, are you doing this? When have you spent even, say, ten minutes in reflection about Jesus, say, reading the Gospels and just reflecting on the cross, just reading the four Gospel accounts of the cross, just to meditate and enjoy and treasure your Saviour who died for you?

When have you spent ten minutes doing that? When was the last time you read the book of Revelation and really allowed yourself to feast on the fact that in the end Jesus wins and in the end the people of God are vindicated?

[13 : 14] When have you given yourself time to do that? We need to make God the centre of our soul's thoughts, of our minds. You cannot just say, well, a day will come and when I'm suffering or when I'm in hospital then I'll really start searching the Scriptures and then I'll start praying then.

You actually need to cultivate this habit now so that this solace that we can have in God is a familiar place for when the day of suffering comes we can draw on it as a familiar place, trusting in God, the habit of adoration and thanksgiving to God, our rock, our fortress, our salvation.

That's David's heart. That's how he was sustained by God in suffering. Having shown us this window, David gives us some challenges in the second half of the psalm beginning at verse 8 and in verse 8 there are actually three challenges.

So see if you can see the three challenges in verse 8. Trust in him at all times, O people. Pour out your heart before him. God is a refuge for us.

The three things are, one, trust him at all times. Don't nurture doubt in your heart. Don't entertain ideas that you can't trust God.

[14 : 38] Nurture that trust. You've got to think, I'm in a covenant with God. It's like a marriage. I'm going to trust God in sickness and in health for richer, for poorer, for better, for worse.

That's how I'm going to trust God. So trust him at all times, what David says, not just in the good times, not just in the bad times, at all times. Secondly, pour out your heart before him. Do what David does in this psalm.

Bring to God your concerns so that you can then leave them with God and be free to focus on God alone. So pour out your heart to God and seek his fatherly comfort.

God, our Father, he's a heavenly Father. It's great to have a Father in heaven who we'll see later. He's all-powerful and all-loving. He's a great Father to pour your heart over to.

And thirdly, it's not quite a command, but I'm taking it as one. He says, God is a refuge for us. He's sort of saying, remind yourself all the time that God is the centre. God is your refuge.

[15 : 40] Make him the centre of your thinking. Preach to yourself that God is a refuge, that God is a fortress, that God is a rock. Preach to yourself that God is a ref, is, you know, mill over the promises of God and the character of God and the goodness of God in his son.

Make that your kind of spiritual food. So, the three things are, verse 8, trust him at all times, pour out your heart before him and preach to yourself the goodness of God, that he's a refuge.

Friends, don't be tempted to focus on people. This is what goes wrong. It's kind of, you could say, this is a law of spiritual physics, that if you focus on people, if you make people the centre, your enemies or even the people you're worried about or yourself, when people are big, God is small.

But, if you focus on God and see him as he really is, when God is seen to be big as he is, then people are small. Does that make sense? Problems don't go away, but you see them in their perspective.

It's in effect what David is saying in verse 9. He gets to a point where he can easily just forget people. He says, those of low estate, they're but a breath.

[17 : 03] Those of high estate, they're a delusion. In the balances, they go up. They are together lighter than a breath. So, saying, by focusing on God, he's able to see that all these people who are after him, they're insignificant compared to his God.

So, when God is big, people are small and that's reality. That's reality. He also challenges us to not trust in our wealth, which is a very big temptation for us with our great healthcare and our great superannuation and our homes to trust, put our security in our affluence.

And David was affluent. He was a king. But he says, verse 10, put no confidence in extortion, set no vain hopes on robbery. If riches increase, do not set your heart on them.

Think about the actual commands there. He's commanding us to choose our hope. He says, put no confidence in, set no vain hopes in, do not set your heart in.

He's saying, you choose, it's your spiritual volition where you put your hope, where you set your confidence, where you put your heart.

[18 : 20] You don't follow your heart, you control your heart. And he's saying, put it in God. Don't put it in your affluence and your earthly security. And finally, he brings us back to God and the wonderful character of God and actually the judgment of God in the final verses.

He says, once God has spoken, twice have I heard this, that power belongs to God and steadfast love belongs to you, our Lord, for you repay all according to their work.

This is a very helpful ending because David's saying that his meditation on God is not wishful thinking. It's not just actually the power of positive thinking or something.

He's basing his reflection on God's own revelation because he says, God has spoken. And so what he's believing about God, the promises, are God's revelation to him in scripture.

Once God has spoken, twice I've heard this. And what has God promised or what has God said about himself? Well, that he is all powerful, that power belongs to him and that he is steadfast in his love, that he is all loving.

[19 : 30] God is all powerful, God is all loving. And you think, you know, once God has spoken, twice I've heard this. I mean, how many times in the Bible do you learn that God is all powerful and all loving?

Well, it's basically on every page. It's kind of ironic he's saying once or twice I've heard it. In the scriptures, you see it revealed all the time, the absolute truth that God is all powerful and all loving.

And so that's, David chooses to believe and take God at his word and it becomes his spiritual food, God's revelation. And some people actually argue philosophically that that can't be the case, that God is all powerful and all loving because there's suffering in the world.

But I think David gives us a clue to solve that riddle as well because God will repay all according to their work.

So, David actually does end with the knowledge of a coming day of judgment. And so often when people, people complain that, you know, well, God can't have the power to help people or God can't have the loving will to help people because we're all suffering.

[20 : 43] What they don't take into account is that a day is coming. When God will set things straight. You know, they argue that atemporally but actually in history, history will end and God will repay everyone according to their work.

And so there is some mileage to be had in knowing that your enemies who cause you suffering, they will pay. And so, I find that very freeing to focus on God knowing that the people that I want to get, well, God will take care of them.

You see? And for David, his own faith, he'll be vindicated on that day. We will be vindicated on the day Jesus comes back. We too will be judged according to our works but just imagine meeting Jesus on the final day, having spent a lifetime focusing on him, taking solace in Jesus, making Jesus our rock and refuge and finding that place with him where we can make him the centre.

it'll be like meeting the person that you've known already. You just haven't seen their face. That'll be a great day for the believer. Well, friends, let's come back to our three stories at the start.

Imagine Jackie, the lonely wife, pouring her heart out to God. She decides rather than to be unfaithful, to flirt with sin, she decides to plead with God again and again and again to improve her marriage.

[22 : 17] And as she prays, she begins to realise that God will take care of her whatever happens, that God is her rock whatever happens. And in doing so, maybe she begins to focus more on her husband's strength and maybe on her own responsibility to be a better wife and stop worrying about critiquing her husband.

She reaffirms daily that God is her salvation and that God's will is that he'll be honoured if she's faithful to her marriage. And the marriage doesn't radically improve, but her faith in God does.

Imagine John on the operation table. He hears himself meditating on all the things that went wrong in the workplace that caused him to be there and wreck his retirement.

But then he stops himself. He hears his own self-righteous bitterness and he thinks, that's not right, I'm a Christian. He decides to not trust himself but to trust God.

He thinks to himself, he meditates, has not my saviour been through worse for me? He meditates, did not my saviour leave heaven to die for me?

[23 : 32] He meditates on the promises of God, that God has promised him eternal life, health and wealth in heaven and God has not promised that for this life.

He reaffirms then and there on the bed going into the operating table his faith in the Lord Jesus and he goes to sleep in the surgery not thinking about his predicament or his enemies but thinking about God.

And when he comes out it doesn't go that well, his health deteriorates but along the way he's able to show many and point many to God the rock. And finally imagine David, the public school teacher who's tempted to compromise his faith.

Well imagine him meditating on this psalm and resolving that God alone, from God alone comes salvation. Therefore, people need to hear it.

His students need to hear it. Other teachers need to hear it. And so though it's costly to himself, he decides with faith to endure the long term ostracising from the other teachers and be open in his Christian faith.

[24 : 43] And he's overlooked for career advancement and he often feels vulnerable and worried about his family and his mortgage but he commits himself to God his rock regularly and he finds a closer walk with Jesus and a refuge of Jesus in that vulnerability.

Friends, when you feel vulnerable or under pressure, where will you go to? Will you go to God or will you just trust yourself? Will you meditate on yourself and on your predicament and on those who got you into that trouble?

Please friends, don't follow that way. Don't follow your heart as it were. Control your heart. Choose to meditate on God the rock.

Choose to meditate on God the refuge. Choose where you'll put your confidence today. Choose where you'll set your heart and put your hope. Don't seek the quick fix, the quick consolation.

God is calling you to a long, slow, deeply held and nurtured trust in his son. God is calling us to a long, slow, deeply held and nurtured trust in the son.

[25 : 59] He is God the father who gave up his son for us. He is God the father who has the power and had the power to raise Jesus from the dead and to give us also eternal life.

So friends, let's put our hope in him today. Let's pray for that. Lord God, we love you and you are our rock and our refuge.

We have no other place to go. Please protect us from ourselves, heavenly father, from going down the dark, bitter paths of bitterness and blaming others and focusing on our suffering rather than on you.

Lord God, please deliver us through Jesus, your son. Please sustain us till the final day and carry us home to you by grace through the day of judgment and into eternal life with you forever.

Amen.