

Psalm 59

This is another story about God saving David from peril. In this case; it is the instance when King Saul sends men to kill David as he lays in his bed. David's wife, Michal, was Saul's daughter. Michal warned David that her dad was going to kill him that night. Jonathan, Saul's son, had just shared a similar warning. This psalm can seem repetitious to the reader. Why do these bad things keep happening to David? It is hard to relate to if you are not facing a similar circumstance. The psalms appeal to men in trouble. I am sure that tribulation martyrs will relate. I am beginning to see that I cannot fully understand the point of a psalm until I live it. There is a *price for admission* to understand these intimate and heartfelt diary entries. The old saying among musicians is: '*If you want to play the blues, you have to pay your dues...you know it don't come easy*'.

The portions of the Bible that are the most-appealing to us are the parts that we are experiencing. One unique thing about Psalms is that they are from men's hearts and prayers; not from prophets or directly from the LORD.

Psalms reveal our struggle between self preservation and God's promises. They all begin with panic; and petition, and then a recognition of God's deliverance.

Our view of what God has allowed in our life is critical. The parable of the talents involves different people being given differing opportunities and challenges. The servant who concluded that his situation was unfair; was essentially judging his master. His self- protective and fearful tendency made him unusable. He lived in fear; and it gave him the excuse to not do his part. We have to trust what God is allowing in our lives; and somehow embrace it.

Why do we have this compilation of David's deliverances from God? Another question might be; why this man had to endure test after test after test. If our lives are a repeating series of similar events; then we are just repeating our classes until we pass the course. Life can seem like a non-stop series of frustrations and challenges at times:

For man also does not know his time: Like fish taken in a cruel net, Like birds caught in a snare, So the sons of men are snared in an evil time, When it falls suddenly upon them. (Ecclesiastes 9:12)

Read Psalm 59:1-4: We need to begin with the context of these events. This comes from 1 Samuel 19:11-18:

Saul also sent messengers to David's house to watch him and to kill him in the morning. And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed." 12 So Michal let David down through a window. And he went and fled and escaped. 13 And Michal took [a]an image and laid it in the bed, put a cover of goats' hair for his head, and covered it with clothes. 14 So when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He is sick." 15 Then Saul sent the messengers back to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may kill him." 16 And when the messengers had come in, there was the image in the bed, with a cover of goats' hair for his head. 17 Then Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me like this, and sent my enemy away, so that he has escaped?" And Michal answered Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go! Why should I kill you?'" 18 So David fled and escaped, and went to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth.

Is this psalm any different from similar psalms like: David hiding in the cave while Saul's men hunted him outside...or when the Israelites betrayed him to Saul after David saved them...or so many similar episodes of near-death experiences?

Our lives can seem like a circular track of similar problems that seem to keep on happening. God allows our life circumstances to sand us down like a block of wood. These events go against our grain; and must be forced upon us. The unbeliever's weaknesses cause him to stumble. The believer keeps tripping in his strengths. David was extremely capable; like the Apostle Paul, or Joseph or Daniel. What do these great and capable leaders have in common? They all had seemingly unfair treatment. It is very hard to help a man who can help himself. He always sees a handy escape. He feels that he can take action on his own. David rescued men from death; and he was a great sheepdog, who protected Israel. He had to see that he could not even rescue himself, anymore than those he was helping. It was only possible by God's hand. It is not just a matter of being blessed with a skill set and opportunity to execute your abilities. Waiting on the Holy Spirit is a tough thing to teach.

My job title as Superintendent is to schedule work among a long list of subcontractors. My value is to do so expeditiously; without injury, defect and profitably so. I have to assume that everything is going to take longer than expected; and there will be unseen conflicts and detail deficiencies to get past. I have taken comfort in being naturally able to multi-task and focus on the big picture; while getting it done faster. Accordingly; God is showing me that I too can get snowed under with too many competing activities taking place in too limited time to do so. Our confidences can become our vulnerabilities.

I am the Lord, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another (Isaiah 42:8)

I am starting to see that my *salt* is not necessarily in just meeting man's expectations in a seemingly contrary unseen series of events. **God is showing me that like David, I am supposed to be faced with things too hard for me.** I used to think of testing as a warning. Now I see it more as God's promise, for my own good. Psalm 19:9-10 tells us that it was a spirit sent from God who inspired Saul to heave a javelin at David.

Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his [e]own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. 33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you [f]will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. " (John 16:32-33)

The temptation is to cry 'soul'; and 'unfair treatment'. Job and Jonah did this; and they were just miserable. In short; we are judging God, when we consider our circumstances unfair. Can you have peace when you feel that life is slapping you around?

"Would you indeed [b]annul My judgment? Would you condemn Me that you may be justified? (Job 40:8)

One visual image that is helpful is to see Jesus riding a lowly donkey into Jerusalem. Am I likewise bringing Christ into my journey? Am I cursing the circumstances that I seem to be *saddled with?* Am I completely misinterpreting the situation at hand? Am I bowing my neck against his steering hand? He has leaned forward and gently told me that he was with me more than once. Isn't that enough? Does the destination really matter, if Jesus is traveling with me, and reigning over me?

Will I ask for help? Will I lose my temper if I seem to be steered off course? Will I lose my peace? Will I take my petition to the LORD? It is becoming more evident that God is going to deliver me. So far he has delivered me 2,000 times; without failure. Many times after my deliverance I look back amidst the pressure, and I see that I said things that diminished my witness in the process. God passed the test; but I hit the panic button again. That is probably the thing for me to focus on. Can I just get through the next test in a more God-honoring way?

Read Psalm 59:5-7: Jesus told us that if the world hated him, it would hate us. Part of being on God's team is to know that you are going to take some blows for the team. It is humbling for a fighting man like David to hide and ask God to protect him.

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21 But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. (John 15:18-21)

Many psalms have a pattern: description of problem, prayer, and deliverance.

Read Psalm 59:8-10: It may be impossible to fully experience God without close calls. We would not dwell on the events.

...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain[b] to the resurrection from the dead. (Philippians 3:10-11)

There is still something more to anxiety and testing to be seen here. We are subject to a lifetime of fear and bondage. Jesus was brought to his knees at Gethsemane. He really was not looking forward to what lay ahead. Moses was faithful to get the people out of Egypt; to only get boxed in a canyon, on the shore of the Red Sea; with Pharaoh's army hot on their trail. The ultimate deliverances tend to be close calls. The Navy SEALS have a training practice where they are allowed to drown, and then be revived. This takes the fear out of their predicament; and trust in their training and their leader.

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For indeed He does not [h]give aid to angels, but He does [i]give aid to the seed of Abraham. 17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being [j]tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.
(Hebrews 2:14-18)

We cannot see God as our deliverer if we solve the problem without him.

Read Psalm 59:11-13: David is not just asking to be personally delivered. He is asking for poetic and public justice. He realizes that they cannot be friends; and they only understand force and power. He wants to raise a victory flag high, and turn on the spotlight to showcase God's honor and loyalty to us. There is an endless wave of unbelievers who could have been after David. David wants the word to get out; to dissuade more evil men from attacking God's people; and their way of life. He wants to blow a trumpet on a mountain top to claim God's victory; to get a little respect for God in a Godless world.

It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him. " (Joshua 6:5)

Read Psalm 59:14-17: We are like sheep among wolves. We really don't fit into the world around us. We are not part of the dog-eat-dog mind set.

"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless[f] as doves. 17 But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. 18 You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; 20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. (Matthew 10:16)

Some commentators say that once you are saved, you become more or less ruined for this world. That does not mean that you cannot play a crucial role. It means that everything here is underwhelming and fails to satisfy.

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, (Philippians 3:20)