

Psalm 60

The Hard Things in Life

God uses hard things to turn our hearts towards him. Being attacked requires an immediate solution. It becomes our top priority in life. This prayer may not so much originate from our repentance; as it is just our only hope (God's intervention). Sometimes we get into a jam; that requires a lunge forward into absolute unknown and uncomfortable territory.

This chapter is about doing the hard things in life. Our nature is to steer clear of conflict. We can become confused by thinking that God is going to intervene; while we do nothing. His saving hand is also his hand of strengthening and training. The history of Israel seems to be kill or be killed. Israel got into horrible positions by being too relaxed with the surrounding culture. Today, our culture is going off of the rails again. It is the same thing for us to hold onto our holiness; amidst our culture.

David and Joshua were Israel's two most successful military captains. This is a psalm related to David going on the offensive; and overtaking Mesopotamia, Syria and Edom. The United States has spilled a lot of blood; to rid the world of tyranny. Today we are less inclined to engage. We seem to be hoping that we can close our eyes; and that we can make deals with the devil.

Read Psalm 60:1-3: This psalm is a Shusham Edith; which translates to the *testimony of a lilly*. It is a play on words relating to the *whiteness* of a lilly. Normally, our *holiness* relates to our abstaining from sin; and focus on God. Holiness can also come in the form of fearing God more than your enemies. It can involve taking risky action. There are times where our trust in God can mean putting our life on the line to push back or crush evil.

One nation that Israel dealt with severely was Edom. Why did the children of Israel have recurring issues with Edom? There has been trouble since Jacob and Esau were in the womb. It formally began to be a big problem on a national level when Moses and the tribes were trying to get back home from Egypt.

Then Edom said to him, "You shall not pass through my land, lest I come out against you with the sword." 19 So the children of Israel said to him, "We will go by the Highway, and

if I or my livestock drink any of your water, then I will pay for it; let me only pass through on foot, nothing more.” 20 Then he said, “You shall not pass through.” So Edom came out against them with many men and with a strong hand. 21 Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his territory; so Israel turned away from him. (Numbers 20:18-21)

Later on, Edom proved to be a lasting mortal enemy of Israel. The Edomites looked forward to seeing the Jews fall as a nation. They looted and killed escaping Jews, when Babylon invaded.

11 In the day that you stood on the other side— In the day that strangers carried captive his forces, When foreigners entered his gates And cast lots for Jerusalem— Even you were as one of them. 12 “But you should not have gazed[c] on the day of your brother [d]In the day of his captivity; Nor should you have rejoiced over the children of Judah In the day of their destruction; Nor should you have spoken proudly In the day of distress. 13 You should not have entered the gate of My people In the day of their calamity. Indeed, you should not have [e]gazed on their affliction In the day of their calamity, Nor laid hands on their substance In the day of their calamity. 14 You should not have stood at the crossroads To cut off those among them who escaped; Nor should you have [f]delivered up those among them who remained In the day of distress. (Obadiah 1:10-14)

This psalm is about the conditions that King David had on his plate. Israel had previously lapsed into 365 years of disobedience during the time of the judges. There were continual invasions because of their independence towards God. Then came the reign of King Saul, which became a back and forth battle between Israel and its neighbors. The people wanted an impressive king; so they rejected God’s plan to use prophets like Samuel to judge the nation. Saul only seemed like the answer. Now David took over; and he was more-focused on pleasing God than himself. David was up to his neck with danger. He had a ton of housekeeping to do with the problematic neighbors. Even though David was a man after God’s own heart, there were some serious battles to get through. Obedience does not mean that we will not have to work up a sweat; and be required to make significant effort.

As believers, we may not have the luxury of just going about our daily planned activities. We can end up with things in our lap too. David had to mount an army and travel through the desert to face a kill or be-killed situation. We are not supposed to

whine about our predicaments and daily unpleasant duties. We need to go forward with zeal and honor God for the opportunity.

After this it came to pass that David [a]attacked the Philistines, subdued them, and took Gath and its towns from the hand of the Philistines. 2 Then he [b]defeated Moab, and the Moabites became David's servants, and brought tribute. 3 And David [c]defeated [d]Hadadezer king of Zobah as far as Hamath, as he went to establish his power by the River Euphrates. 4 David took from him one thousand chariots, [e]seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand foot soldiers. Also David [f]hamstrung all the chariot horses, except that he spared enough of them for one hundred chariots. 5 When the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David killed twenty-two thousand of the Syrians. 6 Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus; and the Syrians became David's servants, and brought tribute. So the Lord preserved David wherever he went. 7 And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. 8 Also from [g]Tibhath and from [h]Chun, cities of [i]Hadadezer, David brought a large amount of bronze, with which Solomon made the bronze [j]Sea, the pillars, and the articles of bronze. 9 Now when [k]Tou king of Hamath heard that David had [l]defeated all the army of Hadadezer king of Zobah, 10 he sent [m]Hadoram his son to King David, to greet him and bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and [n]defeated him (for Hadadezer had been at war with Tou); and Hadoram brought with him all kinds of articles of gold, silver, and bronze. 11 King David also dedicated these to the Lord, along with the silver and gold that he had brought from all these nations—from Edom, from Moab, from the people of Ammon, from the Philistines, and from Amalek. 12 Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah killed eighteen thousand [o]Edomites in the Valley of Salt. 13 He also put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became David's servants. And the Lord preserved David wherever he went. (1 Chronicles 18:1-13)

Read Psalm 60:4-12: God is building us up into something better than we aspire to. He is forcing us to transform. It takes time and pressure. God wants us to become the best version of ourselves.

Joseph's preparation for governor entailed breaking family ties; and seeing the underbelly of the population. Daniel had to repeatedly be pitted against malicious competing counselors to provide unbiased advice. Moses had to lose hope of leadership recognition

and popularity amongst the people to see the path forward more clearly. God called Gideon out of hiding, to become a mighty man of valour. God wanted to transform him.

Now the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites. 12 And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!" (Judges 6:11-12)

God set David up to become a recognized hero.

...thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. 9 And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have [a]cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth. (2 Samuel 7:8-9)

Every play has good guys and bad guys playing their parts. David needed a villain to overcome in order to become a great leader. Edom was an inhospitable neighbor who would use every opportunity to bring Israel down. The children of Israel were denied access to their homeland during their 40 year wilderness journey; and they were threatened. Enemies like Edom would be recurring thorns in the side of the Hebrew people. David had the job of putting an end to these violent and ongoing persecutions.

God has declared the final state of the nations and lands; according to his will. Accordingly, God declared what lands he will claim; and which ones he will wipe out.

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the [c]holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. (Matthew 25:31-33)

World history really revolves around Israel. David had the honor of leading that charge. David will return in the millennium as God's prince.

Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days. (Hosea 3:5)

‘For it shall come to pass in that day,’ Says the Lord of hosts, ‘That I will break his yoke from your neck, And will burst your bonds; Foreigners shall no more enslave them. 9 But they shall serve the Lord their God, And David their king, Whom I will raise up for them. (Jeremiah 30:8-9)

Part of the problem is ourselves. We can’t all be spectators. We pray that God will wipe out the evil in our land; and give us better leaders. What if God tells you to do that dirty job? We obviously should not take those kinds of drastic steps unless God has clearly called us to do so. There was a time in our country when politics, financial gain and careers had less to do with serving our country. It was a burden and a blessing. As Christians, we have to be leery of just becoming takers. We are supposed to be a blessing wherever we are. We do not know if we have a servant's heart until people treat us like a servant. I have prayed to be used; to end up despising how I was treated like a servant to solve somebody else's problem. That is a personal revelation.

We have to fear God more than our enemies. I have noticed that God rewards my effort, not my ability. Doing nothing becomes more and more uncomfortable. My efforts may be laughable; but they are required. I can be working up a sweat to get something done.; and God will send help. My efforts were very inefficient; but my allies were there to get it done. God wants us to experience his victories in our lives.

God is trying to force us to be family and community heroes. As believers, we might retract from the ugly world, into our safe havens. It is hard to overcome our indifference and cowardice. God allows evil tidings to come to our door steps to force us to take action. It is for our spiritual development. God does not really need us to do anything for the kingdom; but we do. He is forcing us to walk more worthy of our calling.

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the [a]author and [b]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. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Everything glorifies God. His enemies play into his hand. Satan may end up only accelerating our repentance. God owns all the countries; and he can do with them as he chooses. Man’s version of peace is usually just an inappropriate compromise.

Second-guessing God's word gets us into big trouble that lasts for generations. God told Moses that his people were not to become one with the idolatrous Canaanites; or it would lead to their demise. They did; and it did.

“When the Lord your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, 2 and when the Lord your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. 3 Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. 4 For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the Lord will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. 5 But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their [a]wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.

Since the beginning; God has blessed and increased mankind. At some point, man becomes corrupt and independent. God allows evil to turn men's hearts back to him. It is almost impossible to bless us continuously. Somewhere in that process of trying to sustain a healthy society; God needs bold men to step into harm's way, to selflessly save others. He is using *black hats and situations* to turn our indifference into acts of valour.