

Psalm 57

We have 2 motivations in our lives. There are things that we are drawn to. There are also things that we fear. David has experienced a series of calamities to take refuge from. Sometimes these two forces (fear and hope) collide in our hearts and minds. This psalm is an *Altaschith*; which means ***Do not destroy***. This chapter is about doing the right thing to draw near and honor God; and yet getting punched in the face and spit on by the people you are saving. It is essentially a picture of how we treated Jesus.

I have seen how demonic opposition tends to be heaviest at *doorways*; rather than *hallways*. When we commence to cross a threshold of a new good work, we experience doubts and fears. Once we are rolling it calms down. This dual force (attraction and fear) phenomenon is seen also in Luke 8. It describes Jesus and his disciples crossing the Sea of Galilee in a boat as they fellowship and travel together. A huge storm threatens to drown them. Jesus calms the storm. Once they land on the other side; they take over a demonic stronghold, deliver demon-possessed men, destroy legions of demons, and commence into wide open healings across the country. God allows us to experience push-back when we are doing what is right. I feel a little like I have been experiencing a little more push back at work during the last three weeks. It seems like we are having to make more effort and experience more setbacks to take shorter advances and progress.

Another aspect of making difficult progress in doing what is right involves prayer. Moses saw his people gain ground in their battle as he prayed for them. When he stopped, the battle overtook them.

And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." 10 So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands became [e]heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13 So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. (Exodus 17:9-13)

These dual forces on the believer is the setting of this chapter. Psalm 22 and Psalm 24 both describe times when David and his accumulating associates hid in caves in the wilderness to hide from King Saul's search pose. David had fellow refugees/rejects; who were also escaping from the government (for other reasons). There were now 400 men who were running from tax liens, debts, and those who were challenging government regulation. It must have been a large encampment of misfits and rude street people. They were bitter, and they had failed in accomplishing their dreams. They had no direction or clear purpose. David became their leader. In the beginning, they may have been insurrectionists and deadbeats. They became transformed men; as they observed David's heart. We have much more influence over others during our struggles than when things are going well. Eventually they became the most noble and accomplished warriors in world history.

Men of God who have extraordinary abilities may have to wrestle with humbling factors. Paul was considered the ultimate authority in local church government; and yet he was not much to look at; and he spent much time in jail. David was a military champion; and yet he had to frequently run and hide. Many well known pastors have major issues in their immediate families. We can feel like we are losing when God is winning through us.

Read Psalm 57:1-3: It is hard to imagine King Saul's ego being so big that he would send troops all over the nation to find David; just because he was popular and loved. Not only this; but anyone who helped David survive was now considered an enemy of the state. Many priests were slaughtered, because they helped David! When you step out for God; you are a target for attacks. It was a crazy, nonsensical and out-of-control government situation. Saul was the people's choice for a leader; not God's choice. Today, the American people have chosen a man to lead our country who does not seem to hold to God-honoring values. Joe Biden represents man doing what is right in his own mind. King Saul's Appeal was that he was tall and good-looking. The children of Israel felt like they were missing out on international status and image by not having a visible champion. The people wanted to have a trophy king to show off to other nations. They rejected the more-common leadership from a simple prophet or judge. God gives us our own ways; but they come with a bitter aftertaste.

Saul has become like a demonic egomaniac. He even tried to kill his own son Jonathan, for being friends with David. He became more focused on remaining popular than protecting his people and honoring God.

David was running and hiding from the government for different reasons than the fugitives who were with him. Having a common enemy can bind men together. David would become king some day. He would need men so committed to him; that they would put themselves in harm's way. These 400 outcasts would become David's mighty men, who were famous for their military accomplishments and fierceness.

Hiding in a cave (under the shadow of God's wings) is like the coming tribulation. There is death outside of our door. It is like the Passover was too. True believers will be spared the death passing over the land outside. Even so; we may experience a ramping up of evil and destruction.

I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. (Revelation 3:10)

Our own threats are different from David's. Our way of life is threatened. Our society is making bad choices. These are the precursors to the tribulation. There are smart people who are intellectually dishonest or blind to the self-evident things of God.

Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. 4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of [b]the prophet Jonah." And He left them and departed. (Matthew 16:3-4)

This world is not going to get better until the LORD returns. How can we have peace amidst growing chaos?

Read Psalm 57:4-6: David had trained soldiers hunting for him outside; but the men who were traveling with him were also violent and dangerous men as well. It was like David hiding from the FBI in San Quentin maximum security prison. It was not exactly safe being around these thugs either. They are very frustrated men; who spew violence from their mouths. He probably had to sleep with one eye open.

David would take these untrained men to attack the invading Philistine armies. He used their anger and need for significance. They had nothing to lose. They were rebels without a cause. These gangsters were impressed at how David led the charge, and took extreme personal risks. Over time; they became brothers in arms; as they saw David fight like a lion against evil. He inspired them to become something better. Now these murmuring

men without a cause had a redeeming purpose. They were transformed from society's rejects into noble warriors of renown. IBM was founded on the principle that common men could do great things.

Read Psalm 57:7-11: Was David bi-polar, or just quick to get past his fears? Somehow David has a settled heart again. How do we get a steadfast heart; that is not shaken in conflict? David somehow transitions from thoughts of death to thoughts of high praise. It is difficult to settle down when someone has it in for us. For me; it is hard to pray or meditate on the word when there is a pressing issue bugging me. Having a settled heart can be a daily challenge when things are going sideways. David is somehow now able to praise God and worship him in this *cave of death*.

Paul also experienced the same perplexing and wonderful attitude transformation on death row.

And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. 24 Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. 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. (Acts 16:23-26)

One of the things that troubles us more than our circumstances is knowing that we are not living true to what we believe. We cannot run away from the mirror. Getting pushed around may not be as painful as realizing that we are allowing evil to prevail in our lives. It is impossible for a born-again believer to continue in sin. His peace will be gone. If we obey God; and get attacked, that is a lot easier to swallow. It's not our fault anymore.

On one hand, David is clearly in harm's way. On the other hand, he is trusting God. He is sticking his neck out for righteousness anyway. God's Holy Spirit will overcome you; and give you lion-like confidence when you are trusting God. It can be exhilarating. Pastor Chuck called it a *venture of faith*.