

# This I Know, that God is For Me

A Sermon on Psalm 56

by

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## 1. Introduction

## 2. When Fears Arise, Put Your Trust in God and His Word (vv. 1-7).

*a. The psalmist cries out to God for help from his enemies (vv. 1-2).*

i. The psalm begins much like many other ones from David, where we find him on the run with enemies on every side.

1. David has fled from Saul to a place called Gath, but this is not much better for him, seeing that the Philistines live here.
2. The servants of the king of Gath recognize David and say, “Isn’t this David, the king of the land? Is he not the one they sing about in their dances: Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands?”
  - a. David overhears this, and the text tells us, “David took these words to heart and greatly feared Achish king of Gath.”
  - b. The way the Hebrew emphasizes David’s fear is a bit more visceral. It tells us that David altogether filled with dread.

ii. In the midst of this time, David turns to the One he knew was able to help.

1. David cries out to God for His grace.
  - a. Thus, David’s approach is not one of presumption, but asking for the undeserved favor of God in his time of need.
  - b. He recognizes his own frailty as a man, yet innately sees that God is not bound by the same limits he is.

2. “Be gracious to me, O God, for man has trampled upon me; fighting all day long he oppresses me. My foes have trampled upon me all day long, for they are many who fight proudly against me” (vv. 1-2).

a. The contrast set between God and man is not properly seen in the English translation, but David uses the term “enosh” for man and “Elohim” for God.

b. The word “enosh” is often used to speak of the insignificance of man.

c. The word “Elohim” magnifies the supremacy and power of God as the Sovereign One over all the earth.

b. *The psalmist affirms his faith in God and His Word (vv. 3-4).*

i. “When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You” (v. 3).

1. The construction of verse 3 is ambiguous in one sense.

a. We know from the context that he is referring to the men identified in verses 1-2.

b. However, the statement itself is open ended, because it shows the potential for fear to arise in his heart again.

2. David’s response to his fear is to put his trust in God.

a. When David is faced with fear of any sort, his resolve is to go to the One he knows can rescue him, and allay his fears.

b. There’s a simple, yet profound truth in this that we often fail to put into practice. The natural reflex of the Christian when fears arise should be to put their faith in God.

ii. “In God, whose Word I praise, in God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?” (v. 4).

1. In one sense, David is bringing to remembrance the promises that were uniquely given to him by God.
  2. At the same time, the phrase is broad; it encompasses all of the Scriptures that David would have had at that time, as well as the message of the prophets.
    - a. The object of David's praise, in other words, is in God's revelation.
    - b. We can see from this that David was a diligent student of the Word. It was in light of what he knew to be true from the Scriptures that he could say, "What can mere man do to me?"
    - c. The natural question for us then is if we too have learned to put our trust in God and His Word?
- c. *The psalmist requests that God would intervene (vv. 5-7).*
- i. "All day long they distort my words; all their thoughts are against me for evil. They attack, they lurk, they watch my steps, as they have waited to take my life" (vv. 5-6).
    1. The hatred these men hold for David is incredible.
      - a. They twist every single word he speaks.
      - b. They lurk, they watch his steps, they lie in wait to take his head.
    2. Every move David makes, his enemies pounce and use it as an opportunity to pour out their malice.
  - ii. "Because of wickedness, cast them forth, in anger put down the peoples, O God!" (v. 7).
    1. In essence, David asks that there be no escape for the wicked men who hunt him down.
      - a. To put it quite bluntly, David is asking that God bring them to Hell.
      - b. Many may be uncomfortable with what David asks for here—but God is the God of justice and wrath.

2. What characterizes David's appeal is that he is a righteous man who trusts in God to take vengeance.
  - a. Shortly after this psalm, he will be in the Cave of Adullam and have the opportunity to take his revenge on Saul.
  - b. However, David doesn't do this. Even as he confronts Saul, he shows his resolve to trust that God will judge between them.
  - c. Again, the question we must ask is if we trust that God will do what is right.

### **3. When Fears Arise, Remember God's Special Care for You (vv. 8-13).**

- a. *The psalmist recalls how God cares for him uniquely (vv. 8-9).*
  - i. "You have taken account of my wanderings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?" (v. 8).
    1. As David reflects upon his situation, what he looks upon is not the enemies that surround him, but the tender mercies of God.
      - a. It is as if God has meticulously kept track of every single step that David has taken since he's fled for his life.
      - b. He's a nomad, a wandering vagabond, with no home to hang his hat and no place to lay at rest—but he is securely in the sight of his Lord.
    2. Now take that idea, and remember what he said about his enemies in verse 6, who watch his every step.
      - a. On one hand, you have David's enemies relentlessly pursuing him and watching his every move.
      - b. On the other hand, you have God watching over David so closely that he is able to say, "God knows my every step."

3. Then notice, David requests that the Lord put his tears in His bottle, and asks,  
“Are they not in Your book?”
  - a. The idea here is that just as you would use a bottle to hold something precious, so David is asking that the Lord would hold his tears in a bottle.
  - b. He knows that just as the Lord has counted every step he’s taken, the Lord has counted and preserved his tears.
  - c. The point is this: if our steps and tears are precious enough to count and preserve, what does that say about God’s care for us?
- ii. “Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call; this I know, that God is for me”  
(v. 9).
  1. It is not that God is merely poised to care for his children by keeping close watch over them—God is poised to act.
    - a. David is confident that when he calls upon the Lord, God will be moved to compassion and defeat his enemies.
    - b. The reason why David is able to make such an assertion is found in the next half of the verse, when he says, “...this I know, that God is for me.”
  2. The knowledge that David speaks of here is not simply a mere understanding of the “facts.”
    - a. His knowledge comes from what he knows of God from the Scriptures—but it speaks to an intimate knowledge that comes by way of experience.
    - b. What he is speaking to is that he has seen firsthand how God has been faithful to His Word.
    - c. In much the same way that God was for David, He is for us. How do we know that God is “for us”? He sent His Son to die for us.

b. *The psalmist reaffirms his faith in God and His Word and give thanks for His care (vv. 10-13).*

i. “In God, whose word I praise, in Yahweh, whose word I praise, in God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?” (vv. 10-11).

1. Note the difference between verses 10-11, and what was seen in verses 3-4.

a. In verse 10 there is an additional clause: “In Yahweh, whose Word I praise.”

b. The word for “man” in verse 11 is also different than the two other times it is used. Here, David uses the word we translate as “Adam,” which simply means “dirt.”

2. The point is much the same as before: man is nothing in comparison with God, and therefore, David has no need to fear. However, the emphasis is slightly different.

a. When David invokes the name of Yahweh and uses the word “Adam” for man, he is showing the fundamental difference between man and God.

b. What then, shall a man formed from the dust of the earth do to us if the God who formed him has promised to care for us?

ii. David’s response in light of this truth then is to praise God. (vv. 12-13).

1. “Your vows are binding upon me, O God; I will render thank offerings to You. For You have delivered my soul from death, indeed my feet from stumbling, so that I may walk before God in the light of the living” (vv. 12-13).

a. David’s confidence in God’s rescue is so certain that his response is a vow of thanksgiving and praise.

b. Yet the purpose of his rescue is that he might walk before God in the light of the living.

2. What David looked to through this time in his life were the promises of God.
  - a. He knew that God had anointed him to become Israel's next king—and yet that promise was threatened.
  - b. David had fear, like any other person would, yet he brought his fear under submission to the Word of God.

#### 4. Conclusion

**Benediction:** May the grace of our Lord guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. May His tender mercies guide you always and ever back to your loving Father. May the Spirit, your Comforter, grant you peace and wisdom on day when fears arise.