

What to Do In Times of Trouble

A Sermon on Psalm 57

by

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1. Introduction

2. Seek God's Grace (v. 1a).

- a. "Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me..."
 - i. David sees he is surrounded by his enemies, and his first instinct is to look to God for grace.
 1. Grace here is simply seen as God's undeserved favor.
 2. Behind David's plea is an urgent request for rescue on the basis of God's own character.
 - ii. Two times, David cries out to the Lord for grace.
 1. The repetition of his request here is not like those vain repetitions we find condemned by Christ in the New Testament.
 2. David's repeated pleas for grace shows us who David trusts. He trusts in the God he knows has compassion on His children.
- b. Our response in times of trouble is to seek God's grace.
 - i. We cry out to God for grace not because we believe it is owed to us, but that God is a gracious God.
 1. Grace is part and parcel to God's own character.
 2. We serve a God who shows compassion on His children.
 - ii. He has shown us the fulness of His grace towards us in Jesus Christ.
 1. The idea of grace itself is the essence of the gospel.

2. Thus, if God so richly gives us grace by saving us from the wrath to come—what stops you from coming to Him in lesser things?

3. Take Refuge in God (v. 1b).

- a. “For my soul takes refuge in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge until destruction passes by.”
 - i. Notice that David trusts in God with all his being.
 1. David recognizes he is utterly dependent on God for everything.
 2. In light of this, David knows he can safely retreat to God in the midst of this affliction.
 - ii. Therefore, David will place himself under God’s protection until destruction passes by.
 1. The imagery here is a rather wonderful way to show how safe and secure God is to His people on the day of their distress.
 2. Taking refuge in the shadow of God’s wings shows a sort of tender care that God has, but it also shows He is a genuine refuge.
- b. Our response in times of trouble is to take refuge in God.
 - i. The fulness of our trust and hope is to be placed in God and God alone.
 - ii. Only the Lord is a sure refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. He will see us faithfully through to the end of all our troubles.
 1. When you make the Lord your refuge, you can find true comfort in the care and protection of the Lord in this life.
 2. When you make the Lord your refuge, it ensures you that one day, your troubles will be no more.

4. Call Upon God for Rescue (v. 2).

- a. “I will cry to God Most High, to God who accomplishes all things for me.”

- i. As David cries out to God, he recognizes God’s sovereignty in the midst of his affliction.
 - 1. The title “God Most High” is used to emphasize God’s ultimate power and control over every bit of creation.
 - 2. To put it more clearly: David is going to pray to the One he knows is able to actually do something about his troubles.
 - ii. This is why David gives a parallel description to God as the One “who accomplishes all things for me,” or as some of your translations put it, “who fulfills His purpose for me.”
 - 1. The point in this is simple: God is the Sovereign One who is able to work out the problems David is currently facing.
 - 2. What we see in this is that the sovereignty of God is not merely a theological point for David.
- b. Our response in times of trouble is to call upon God for rescue.
- i. God is the sovereign One. He sees us in our times of trouble, and He is able to save us from harm.
 - 1. For the one who cherishes this reality, this is a balm to your soul.
 - 2. For some of you though, the sovereignty of God is something that provides you with very little hope at all.
 - ii. The sovereignty of God is one of the best reasons you should pray, and pray all the more earnestly.
 - 1. Yet sadly, one of the things we struggle with the most as Christians is prayer.
 - 2. The sovereignty of God should always move us to cry out in greater trust and reliance.

5. Remember God Gives Sufficient Grace (v. 3).

- a. “He will send from heaven and save me; He reproaches him who tramples upon me. God will send forth His lovingkindness and His truth.”
 - i. David expects that God has heard his prayers and will come to rescue him by exercising His judgment.
 - ii. How God will save David is by sending forth His lovingkindness and His truth.
 - 1. What David remembers in the midst of trouble is that God is always faithful and true.
 - 2. This is, in essence, the grace he spoke about in verse one.
- b. Our response in times of trouble is to remember God gives sufficient grace.
 - i. God will supply grace and truth to us in our time of trouble.
 - 1. He will reassure us that His promises are always faithful and true.
 - 2. God will also supply us with grace upon grace to endure through sufferings.
 - ii. God displayed this most in the fullness of time, when He sent His One and Only Son to die for our sins.
 - 1. Remember: long ago, the first-fruits of the promise were given to Adam and Eve that One would come to crush the head of the Deceiver.
 - 2. Jesus Christ is the very embodiment of God’s faithfulness and truth.

6. See Things as They Truly Are (v. 4).

- a. “My soul is among lions; I must lie among those who breathe forth fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows and their tongue a sharp sword.”
 - i. The way David describes his enemies is that they are ferocious and malicious.
 - ii. Despite their goals to “bite and devour” David, he must lie down among them.
 - 1. There are two ways one can take this phrase.

- a. The first is that David is lamenting his circumstances. This would fit well with how hateful these men are toward him.
 - b. The second, which is the way I view it, is that David is still able to be at rest among those who seek his harm.
2. The point then is that David's confidence, despite his circumstances, is placed in God, who is his refuge
- b. Likewise, our response in times of trouble is to see things as they truly are.
 - i. What this requires is that we start to look at things in their proper perspective.
 1. We do no favors by pretending as if things are not as bad as they seem.
 2. Yet despite all of these things, you can be at peace if you see that God is still your refuge and strength in the midst of great evil.
 - ii. The Christian who looks upon God in the midst of evil days will find refuge, despite how bleak things truly are around them.
 1. The reason for this is simple: you have a hope that far surpasses whatever evils befall you in this life.
 2. This hope is the only thing that can bring you true peace amidst trouble.

7. Believe God Will Make Things Right (v. 6).

- a. "They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down; they dug a pit before me; they themselves have fallen into the midst of it."
 - i. Notice this verse starts with yet another bleak description of David's circumstances. His enemies lay a trap for him.
 - ii. Yet the expectations are suddenly reversed. Rather than David falling into their trap, these men have fallen into it.

1. There is a poetic justice to see this type of thing in action, and it leaves one utterly satisfied to see it play out.
 2. What this kind of justice intends to show us is that indeed, God will make all things right.
- b. Our response in times of trouble is to believe God will make all things right.
- i. One of the great hopes of the Christian is that God will accomplish justice, in this life or the next.
 - ii. Yet the abiding hope of the Christian is found in the return of Christ, where He will come to judge the living and the dead.
 1. In the same instant, what is a day of terror for the unbeliever is a great day of salvation for the believer.
 2. And the truly wonderful thing in all of this is that you and I will recognize our glorious King, Jesus Christ, who accomplished justice even by His death.

8. Resolve to Trust in God (v. 7).

- a. "My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast..."
- i. Despite the circumstances looming on every side, David's heart is unwavering in his outlook.
 - ii. What this means is that David would not allow the circumstances to cause him to lose faith in God.
 1. He would remain true and loyal to God regardless of what lay ahead.
 2. He would set his heart on trusting God and His Word, yet he would be further resolved to obey God.
- b. Our response in times of trouble is to resolve to trust in God.

- i. When difficult days arise, one of the simple ways you can navigate through them well is to be given to regular self-counsel.
 - 1. The question I ask people time and again is: what is the well you draw from?
 - 2. If you do not draw from the “deep well” of Scripture, your well will prove shallow in times of trouble.
- ii. The only reason Christians can remain steadfast in the midst of suffering is because of who God is, what He has done, and what He promises to do.
 - 1. The only thing we do as pastors is to remind you of what is true.
 - 2. Our goal is to force the question: is the Word of God enough for you to resolve to trust Him?

9. Let Your Lips Sing Praises to God (vv. 7b-8).

- a. “I will sing, yes, I will sing praises! Awake, my glory! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn.”
 - i. At this point, David’s confidence in the Lord is in full swing.
 - ii. David is so eager he commands the musical instruments and the dawn itself to rise from their slumber and fulfill their purpose of praise.
- b. Our response in times of trouble is to let our lips be filled with praise to God.
 - i. When we gather together for church, on any given Sunday, you will find your brothers and sisters all along a spectrum.
 - 1. Some come in the height of life. Everything is going well and times are good. Others come at the lowest of lows, and things can’t get much worse.
 - 2. Yet it is a precious thing when both can come together and sing God’s praises.
 - ii. At the heart of praise is the recognition that whether in times of adversity or times of peace, God is worthy.

1. Praise brings the truth to bear deep down in the recesses of our soul like no other thing in this life.
2. On both good and evil days, you can yet sing God's praises, for He has made them both.

10. Proclaim God's Grace to All (v. 9-10).

- a. "I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to You among the nations. For Your lovingkindness is great to the heavens and your truth to the clouds."
 - i. The typical response for David would be to go to the temple to make good on his vows, but he has a much wider audience in mind.
 - ii. The reason for such praise is found in verse 10: God is faithful and true—not just to Israel, but to all the earth.
 1. The phrase is stated in such a way that it shows God's covenant faithfulness and truth extend throughout all of heaven and earth.
 2. Thus, when grace comes to David in salvation, his plan is to spread the good news: God is a gracious God. Even the Gentiles are called to faith and worship.
- b. Our response in times of trouble is to proclaim God's grace to all.
 - i. One the things we seldom contemplate is if God has given us our trials for us to give the gospel to the lost.
 - ii. The reason why we ought to think in these terms is that we, of all people, have an actual hope in the midst of times of trouble.
 1. Every single person on earth will undergo trials. That is the guarantee of living in a world marred by sin.
 2. Christians have a radically different perspective when it comes to suffering, at least if we are thinking biblically.

11. Concern Yourself with God's Glory (vv. 5, 11).

- a. "Be exalted above the heavens, O God; let Your glory be above the earth."
 - i. Twice this phrase comes up in our psalm today—and this is the main point of the entire psalm.
 1. David's burden is that through his current predicament, God gets the glory in the end.
 2. Every step along the way is just another means by which God is glorified, and David reaps the benefit.
 - ii. Yet what ought not be ignored in this refrain of the psalm is that David is invoking God to show Himself before the people of earth.
 1. He is asking that the Lord would bring forth His kingdom, on earth as it is in heaven.
 2. The day we see this happen, beloved, is when Jesus Christ returns to rule from the throne of David during the millennium.
 - a. We see David do much the same in Psalm 22.
 - b. What David anticipated was not merely that the Lord would save him from His enemies—but that Yahweh would rule over all the earth.
- b. Our response in times of trouble, is ultimately, to concern ourselves with God's glory.
 - i. In short, what it means to glorify God is to love Him with all of your heart, mind, and strength.
 1. So, the question becomes, how do I do this in the midst of times of trouble?
 2. Well, I just preached a whole sermon on that, beloved, but if I were to try and sum it up: you make God and His Word your all-consuming delight.
 - ii. You cannot do this apart from Jesus Christ.

1. For some of you, this is where you must start.
2. For many of you, this is where you must come back.
3. For all who trust in Christ, none shall He disappoint.

Benediction: May the Lord, who is faithful and true, send forth His grace to guard you and keep you until the day of Jesus Christ. May He grant you both peace and joy in times of adversity. May He fill your lips with praise, that you may glorify your Savior and King all the days of your life. Amen.