

I Will Trust in the Name of the Lord

A Sermon on Psalm 54

by

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1. Introduction

2. I Will Call upon the Name of the Lord, for He is My Advocate Who Saves Me (vv. 1-3).

a. I will appeal to the God who saves, vindicates, and hears my prayers (vv.1-2).

i. “Save me, O God, by Your name” (v. 1a).

1. When David asks that the Lord save him by His name, what He appeals to is the foundation of all that God is.

a. All throughout Scripture, God has revealed various aspects of His character and nature to His people.

b. All of these names give us a different perspective of who God truly is.

2. It is on this basis of who God is that David cries out to the Lord to save him, because he knows there is no other name in heaven and earth that can do so.

a. David is truly at the end of his rope here and every which way he turns, he is surrounded by those who wish to see him die.

b. He doesn't know who he can trust among men—but he knows that the Lord has promised to judge evil, and this is precisely what he needs.

ii. In light of this, David asks the Lord, “...vindicate me by your power” (v. 1b).

1. Immediately, the tone of David's request has shifted as he appeals to the God of true, biblical justice.

a. His request is a simple one: that God vindicate him.

- b. His focus is on two key aspects of who God is. God is the God of truth and God is the God of power.
2. David is not asking that God judge him and find him innocent—David knows he is innocent. Rather, David is asking that the Lord would prove his innocence by delivering him from harm.
- a. It carries a specific, judicial response: the Lord must intervene and prove David's innocence by rescuing him, otherwise, he is doomed and his enemies are proved right.
 - b. His need is desperately urgent. Therefore, he cries, "Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth."
 - c. In David's prayer though is the presumption that God actually hears him and cares for him.
 - d. What proves true for David proves to be equally true for all those who trust in the Lord.

b. I will appeal to God who sees my distress (v. 3).

- i. "For strangers have risen against me and violent men have sought my life" (v. 3a).
 - 1. The term "strangers" is often reserved for those who are foreigners, meaning they are not Israelites, who have come in to attack God's people.
 - a. But here, the term is used to describe those who are Israelites.
 - b. Ultimately, David is saying that though they may be flesh and blood, they are not believers.
 - 2. They are violent men who have formed an organized assault against him, and their goal is quite clear: they want to kill him.

- a. Not only does this show just how urgent David's request actually is, but it reveals just how far from God these men truly are.
 - b. All of their actions stem from a much deeper, unresolved issue of the heart.
- ii. The fundamental reason why David regards them as foreigners is not merely that they are violent men who seek to kill him. "They have not set God before them" (v. 3b).
- 1. This is the same statement David made in Psalm 53, where he says, "The fool in his heart says, 'There is no God.'"
 - a. To "set God before them" would mean that they are a people who love the Lord for who He is and obey His commands.
 - b. Yet as you can clearly see from verse 3, this is not the case. They are, at best, pretenders.
 - 2. To David, they are truly foreigners in the fullest extent of what that means.
 - a. They may be part of visible gathering of God's people, but they are not one of them.
 - b. They were, to put it bluntly, religious hypocrites. However, these men had much power, which left the people with a very real question: do they fear the Lord or do they fear men?
 - c. For David and all those who feared the Lord, the answer was clear, but it was not without consequence.
 - d. Yet the people of God could stand confidently and call upon the name of the Lord, for He is the Advocate who saves.

3. I Will Hope in the Name of the Lord, for He is My Helper Who Sustains Me (vv. 4-5).

- a. *I will trust the God who helps and sustains (v. 4).*

- i. "Behold, God is my helper" (v. 4a).
 1. The tone of the psalm shifts dramatically once again, as David interjects with a sudden declaration to pay close attention to what he is about to say.
 2. No longer is the psalmist crying out to the Lord for help. Rather, he is confidently asserting who God is: God is my helper.
 - a. God is the One who stands by David in his time of need. Never has there been a moment where God has failed to come to his aid.
 - b. It is not that God is the One who fills up what is lacking in David, but rather, God is the One who meets his every need.
- ii. "The Lord is the sustainer of my soul" (v. 4b).
 1. David looks well beyond the reality at hand and recognizes that in life and death, trial or comfort, God is ultimately keeping him safe.
 - a. Not only does God supply him with each and every breath he takes, but the Lord continues to safeguard and sustain the very soul of his servant.
 - b. As David is tempted to despair, the Lord lifts up his spirit and reminds him of the foundational truths that he confesses.
 2. Think of this in light of your own life, where the Lord has provided for you in your time of need and lifted up your weary heart.
 - a. The point is not so much that the Lord removes every difficulty from you, but that He supplies for your every need in the midst of the trial.
 - b. For the true Christian, trials, suffering, and even persecution, will always produce more joy and hope in the Lord.

- c. Suffering, trials, and even persecution, are the means God is often pleased to use to refine how we see Him, and draw our affections toward Him.

b. *I will trust the God who repays evil (v. 5).*

i. "He will recompense the evil to my foes" (v. 5a).

1. What David expresses here is yet another aspect of who God is. God is the righteous Judge of all the earth, and the One who will not let evil go unpunished.
2. Yet David also expresses something about the way God works in His righteous judgment of evil.
 - a. Just as these men have come up against David to trap and kill him, the Lord will return the favor upon them.
 - b. God often has this way of executing a sort of poetic justice, where he reverses the fortunes of the wicked and the righteous through His judgment.
 - c. The principle behind this truth about God is that He is the ultimate Judge who will repay evil accordingly, and therefore, we need not fret.

ii. "Destroy them in Your faithfulness" (v. 5b).

1. Depending on what translation you use, that word might be reflected differently.
 - a. If you use the King James or New King James, it will not be "faithfulness," but "truth." However, many of your other translations will use the word "faithfulness."
 - b. Both of them are trying to say the same thing, but it is difficult to convey the meaning of the word in English, because it is speaking of the enduring, faithful, truthfulness of God.

2. When David asks that the Lord destroy the wicked by His faithfulness and truthfulness, he appeals to an aspect of God's own unchanging nature.
 - a. Numbers 23:19 summarizes this quite well when it says of God that He "is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man that He should change His mind. Has he said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not fulfill it?"
 - b. David is just bringing the truth that God has revealed about Himself back to God, and asking that God would be consistent with His own character.
 - c. Part of that reality is that according to God's own holiness and utter perfection is that He must judge evil and destroy the wicked.
 - d. And beloved, this is the same reality that awaits all of those who do not place their faith and hope in Jesus Christ.

4. I Will Praise the Name of the Lord, for He is My Righteous Judge Who Delivers Me (vv. 6-7).

- a. *I will give thanks to the God who is good (v. 6).*
 - i. "Willingly I will sacrifice to You; I will give thanks to Your name, O Yahweh, for it is good" (v. 6).
 1. David's confidence in the Lord shines through as he makes a vow to bring sacrifice and thanksgiving before the Lord at the temple.
 - a. Remember: David is far removed from Jerusalem at this point. He has Saul and his fellow Israelites seeking to kill him.
 - b. Yet he rests confidently that he will return to the temple to be able to make good on his vows here. The reason is quite simple: David trusts in the promises of His God because he knows that God will not fail him.

2. It is here and here alone in this psalm that David invokes the personal name that God revealed to Israel: He is Yahweh, the Great I AM.

a. This God, who is the Lord over all creation and rules with absolute authority, is the very God who covenants with His people and makes himself known to them.

b. By invoking the personal name of God, David is bringing to the forefront that God is that the God of the promise. He cannot fail, because to do so would be for God to stop being God.

ii. Therefore, David looks with the utmost confidence that God will be found faithful and true, just as He has always been found to be faithful and true.

1. But more than this, David's vow of praise to God is because God's name is good, which is simply another way of saying that God Himself *is* good.

a. David's response in the midst of his trial really hinges on this reality that God is good.

b. As he looks to the character of God, he concludes by summing up who God is: the very fount of all that is good.

2. Yet that goodness of God's character culminates in what David knows the Lord will accomplish in delivering him.

b. *I will give thanks to the God who delivered (v. 7).*

i. "For He has delivered me from all trouble, and my eye has looked with satisfaction upon my enemies" (v. 7).

1. Remember, David is in the midst of his trial. Saul is still very much alive and active in his pursuit to kill him.

2. Yet he looks to this future deliverance that God will accomplish and can say that even as his enemies pursue him, he can look upon them in triumph.
- ii. David's triumph here is not him gloating over the misfortunes of his enemies. He is anticipating the Lord's perfectly righteous administration of judgment.
 1. He recounts not only the vast perfections of his Lord in every aspect of His character, but specifically, God's goodness in judging evil. Why is this important?
 - a. The very same judgment that falls upon the wicked is the means God uses to save the righteous.
 - b. As God exercises His righteous judgment, it is a grace to His people, because by it, He delivers them.
 2. In some cases, that deliverance is immediate, meaning we see it in this life. Yet in many cases, that deliverance is something we anticipate by faith.

5. Conclusion

Small Group Questions:

1. How has your understanding of the nature and character of God deepened as a result of this psalm?
2. When you faced your last trial, how did the character of God inform how you handled it?
3. Where do you see a need to strengthen your understanding of who God is, so that you may come to trust in Him all the more during your next trial?