

A World of Fear — Delivery Transcript

Psalm 56 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, January 5, 2025 · Facing Fear

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And if you have your Bibles, you can open them to Psalm 56. If you don't have a Bible, there should be one on the chair in the seat in front of you. I actually had someone take me up on my offer that I do from time to time that if you don't own a Bible, and that one's there under your seat. You can take it, and that can be your Bible as our gift to you. I would encourage you to also join a small group and go get you the CSB Bible journal.

It's even better than that pew. But as you're turning to Psalm fifty-six on the way there I want you to put a finger in first Samuel chapter twenty-one because those two passages are actually related with one another. The idea of having a spiritual growth campaign on a mental health crisis may feel a little bit odd, but it is a growing problem in our culture that more and more people are coming to acknowledge. I assumed it was bad just anecdotally from my own pools of experience, but when I actually did the research on it's more prevalent than I imagined.

They say in the NIH that one out of five people will experience some kind of mental health crisis this year alone, and that one in three people will experience some kind of mental health crisis within their lifetime. And so all of us in this room may not have mental health struggles, but most are a good amount of people in this room are experiencing or will experience something along those lines and so it's I think important for us to know how to handle it when it happens to us and more importantly how to handle it when it happens to the people that we love.

And the vast majority of those mental health issues, if you talk to a psychologist will tell you that they're rooted in a single human emotion and that single human emotion is fear. And I know doesn't sound intuitive on the surface, but historically psychologists boiled down all mental health pathologies to two big buckets. They were neurotic, which means you were in touch with reality and afraid. Or you were psychotic, which meant that you were out of touch with the reality and afraid. But whether you were neurotic or psychotic, you had a common denominator of being afraid.

You were out of touch and afraid or in touch and afraid, but you were afraid. And that has now evolved into what we have today, which is a whole plethora of mental health diagnoses of various types of fear. But at the end of the day, it's all rooted in that single human emotion of fear. I just did a quick survey of the most common forms of fear and anxiety or mental health struggles, and the biggest one is goes by the anachronym SAD. Fear of social situations involving scrutiny or judgment. That's called social anxiety disorder.

That's why a lot of people have a fear of public speaking. That's why when you have to give a verbal test or if you're going to be in front of people who are looking at you and judging you, there's a little anxiety that comes along with that. About 7.1% of people struggle with that. Disorder. There's GAD, G A D, which is generalized anxiety disorder, PTSD, which is more popular, a traumatic event that causes fear and anxiety after the fact there's PD, which is panic disorder, which is where anxiety attacks come in.

And if you've ever had an anxiety attack, you know that the anxiety attack itself is debilitating and terrible. But it's actually the fear and anxiety that follows that anxiety attack of when's the next attack going to come that really disrupts your life. You've got OCD, which is obsessive compulsive disorder, which is intrusive thoughts resulting in repetitive behaviors to alleviate a fear and on and on we could go. That doesn't include the 10% of people who struggle with specific type of phobias, all the big long words like arachnophobia or acrophobia which means fear of heights or agoraphobia which means fear of not being able to escape, aviophobias, fear of flying, arachnophobia, fear of spiders, claustrophobia, fear of tight spaces, mysophobia, fear of germs Ophidiophobia, guess what that one is?

Fear of snakes. Some of us have that one. I don't understand this one. Cynophobia, fear of dogs. Who's afraid of dogs? I guess I'm afraid of some dogs but the little Chihuahua dogs and they're not so they're not so scary. Except there was this one Chihuahua dog. It was kind of scary. A blutophobia, some of your kids have this one, fear of bathing. Omphalophobia, fear of belly buttons, I'm not that one. Papophobia is fear of the Pope and Coulrophobia, that's legit, fear of clowns. And if you don't have that one, I got a movie I can recommend that'll take care of that real fast.

Now we could go I'm serious, we could go on and on and on and on and on. You can see just with the A's alone, plus some of these weird ones, just how widespread it is. And everybody's f had a f struggle with fear at one point or another. And the reality is historically this is not new. People have struggled with fear since human civilization began. But w the difference is historically fear was usually isolated to specific geographical regions or specific temporal events like the bubonic plague or a battle or a war or some kind of economic recession.

But what's different today is that the stressors that create the fear are global in scope. We have things like pandemics that affect the whole world or we have things like the internet which create things like social media and social media is all over the world and there's more

and more studies coming out how disastrous social media is on young people's minds, creating anxiety and even old people, of comparing your real life to everybody else's manicured fake life and that creates anxiety across the board. You've got world wars and pandemics and twenty-four hour news, which somebody said it stopped being news when it went to twenty-four hours.

But the point is it creates all this fear and anxiety. And when you combine that increasing global stressor thing with a decreasing commitment to spiritual community and a decreasing commitment to s to just religious conviction in general, the decrease of things that used to help alleviate fear along with the increase of things that create fear, have actually brought us to a pandemic, a global crisis of mental health where we are more afraid today than we have ever been before. And it's not just true of young people, it's true of all of us.

Now you may say to yourself, well, that may be true of other people, but not true of me You know, you're not afraid of anything. As the FDR says, the only thing to fear is fear itself. And aren't you strong? You know, that's great. But I think it's probably not what you may think. I think you're probably more fearful than you think. And I want to try to persuade you of that s at some point in this series. And the reason I say that is you can't swim in this culture that is increasingly sick with anxiety without it somehow rubbing off on you to one degree or another.

And in our culture is sick with anxiety. The other thing is you have an enemy. At least Christian theology we teach that our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers of the distark age, and the prince of the power of the heir is the devil. Satan wants to destroy you. He wants to kill still and destroy your joy and contentment and confidence and faith in the Lord. And he does that very effectively because he knows you sometimes better than you even know yourself. And he plants little seeds along the way to cripple you with fear and anxiety.

And because you're up against that kind of an enemy and you live in this kind of a culture, I think you're probably more afraid than you think. And there's plenty of fodder for the fire, right? We have the election that we just passed. We are on the brink of what people keep calling forecasting a an economic recession. There are as an increasing decay in our culture morally and spiritually, there are reasons to be afraid. So how do you address your fear? Well, biblically speaking, the way to address fear is pretty simple.

I wouldn't say it's easy, but it's simple. In fact the Bible gives the command, do not fear, more than any other command. 365 times. Oddly enough, it's kind of ironic. One for every day of the year. And you have to kind of try hard and do better. But when it gives a command, it grounds the command in a reason or a motivation. As my seminary profs used to say, the imperatives or the commands of scripture. Follow out of the indicatives which are

the statements of facts or truths of scripture. And when it comes to the command do not fear, the imperative is grounded in truths like fear not for I am with you.

Isaiah 41. 10. God is present, so we don't have to be afraid. Or God is powerful. I fight for you. God is He will protect, He will provide, He will lead, He will shepherd on and on we could go. In other words, the antidote for fear from a biblical perspective is an increasing knowledge of who God is and in light of who God is, how he will then interact with his creation or interact in the world. And when you increase in your knowledge of God, it puts your fears where they belong.

It shrinks your fears as your knowledge of God grows, which is the whole idea behind this spiritual growth campaign. Now I know it sounds self serving for a preacher to say your biggest problem and culture is answered by what I'm going to talk about every Sunday morning. It just coincidentally, you know, is it may sound self-serving, but it's actually true. That's the Christian response to fear and anxiety. It's an increasing knowledge of who God is and what he does in the world. And so that's what we're going to do over the next eight weeks in the Psalms, because the Psalms, more than any other book in the scripture are inviting us in into this way of thinking and feeling and praying and dealing with the fears that we all experience.

And we're going to see in these Psalms words that we would say ourselves in light of the situations that we find ourselves in. And that psalm this morning is Psalm 56. So Psalm 56, if you haven't already got there, beautiful, wonderful psalm. And at the very top of the psalm is this inscription. And it's not in well it wasn't in the propresenter thing, so I had to actually write it in, but it was in the original text. The heading that I have is a call for God's protection. That boldface heading is not in the original text, but this part is in the original text, and it says it's for the choir director.

According to a silent dove far away, a mikum of David, when the Philistines seized him in Gath. Now the reason those inscriptions are in the Psalms is to kind of help situate the psalm in the history of Israel, or in this case, the story of David's life. We don't know what this word means, amictum. It's debated. It comes from the Hebrew root KTM because all Hebrew words have a three-letter root. And it either means engraved or precious. You know, Gollum is precious. And I kind of think of it as David's top ten list because not every psalm is a mikdem.

Psalm 56 is a micdom, 57, 58, 59, and 60 are micdoms, and then Psalm 16 is a micdom. And I kind of think of it as David's top six list or his top ten list. And it's those things that he held close to his heart. They were his precious songs. They were engraved on his heart. He had every word memorized. Maybe it does, maybe it doesn't. That's what I think it means. And then this idea according to a silent dove far away, that is the tune or the melody. Today you would be saying something like, I sing this psalm to the tune of amazing grace.

Or gratitude that we just sang earlier. And so that's how the psalm would be set to music. I think that's what that means. I think that's what this means. We're not quite sure, but what we are sure of is this phrase, when the Philistines seized him in Gath That's actually recorded in the scripture in 1 Samuel. In other words, the context for Psalm 56 is 1 Samuel 21. Verses 10 to 15. And when you begin to understand this psalm in light of that context, all of a sudden the psalm really comes to life and begins to make sense.

Now, some of you are not familiar with the Old Testament and you don't know what 1 Samuel 10 is all about, so I want to give you a quick overview so that we can really dig into Psalm 56. 1 Samuel was written to record the story of a boy named Samuel who was born to a girl named Hannah who couldn't have babies. Hannah had a baby named Samuel. She dedicated him to the Lord, and the Lord used Samuel to appoint Israel's first king. First king of Israel was Saul.

Saul was head and shoulders above the rest. That's where they got the name for the shampoo. Just kidding. That's because you're dangerous on your head and your shoulders. But Saul was great at first and then not so great. He became wicked in the eyes of the Lord said, you're not a good king, so you're fired. Samuel, your job, appoint a new king. And so Samuel's like, well, I don't know if I want to do that because Saul's really kind of this egomaniac. He might kill me. And God was like, well, who do you work for?

Saul or me, and Samuel's like, well, I guess I work for you. So he goes to Bethlehem, goes to Jesse's house. Jesse was the son of Obed, who was the son of Ruth and Boaz, who we studied in the genealogies of Jesus, that was the royal line through whom God was going to bring the next king. Jesse brings out all of his sons and Samuel's like, not that one, not that one, not that one, not that one. And the reason is because God was looking at the heart, not the outer person.

And finally Jesse says, well, that's all my boys, except for this little puny one, David. Very pretty, very artsy. That's about it. So he brings out David and Samuel says, that's the guy. That's the guy. Anoint him as king. So that's what Samuel does. It's in 1 Samuel chapter 16. He anoints David in front of all of his brothers, and the Spirit of the Lord comes powerfully on David from that day forward. And Samuel sent out and went to Ramah. Psalm fifty-six assumes this anointing by David. You need to know that.

Because David to some degree knew that God had a special plan for his life. We don't know if he knew that he was supposed to be king. But he was chosen above all of his brothers to be specially used by the Lord, anointed by this prophet. And that what happens is David grows up, he becomes a shepherd, and as a shepherd he also serves as Saul's guitar player in the kingdom. He would sing fancy songs for Saul when he was feeling sad. And then one day when David was traveling back and forth from the king's palace to his house in Bethlehem, His dad instructs him to take some food portions to his brothers who were serving.

In Saul's army while they were fighting against the Philistines. And one of the Philistines that they were fighting was a very famous Philistine, a nine foot, nine inch giant, phil gigantic Philistine, by the name of, you know it Goliath, that's right. Guess where Goliath was from? He's from Gath. And Goliath, when they're fighting down here in the valley of Elah, he would come out every day and he would taunt the Israelites. Let us go one-on-one, me versus your champion. And I don't know what he sounded like, but probably not that.

They every day would hear it, 40 days Forty nights in the morning and in the evening, Goliath would come and say, if he wins, we serve you. If I win, you serve us. And none of the Israelites would take Goliath up on the offer. But when David got there with the food portions for his brothers, he's like, who's this fool? And how's he talking about that? I'll take him out. I'll take him out right now. And all the people are like, you're crazy, man. You're a crazy little dude. And so they sent him up to Saul and Saul's like.

Yeah, but you're my best guitar player. I don't know if I want to lose you, but Yeah, what the heck. So he gives him the armor and David's like the armor doesn't fit. So he tosses the armor and he goes into battle against Goliath with just a sling and a rock. And he slings the rock and it hits Goliath in the head, poof, he falls to the ground, and David walks this part's not in the kid version, but he goes over there to the giant, he pulls this big old sword out of the sheath, and he cuts the head off of the giant, and when he cuts the head off of their key, big the best soldier, all the Philistines were like, whoa.

And so they start running. And they that's what this map is this. That's why I love this map. They run all the way to Gath and they run all the way to Ekron And it says the Israelites chased them and littered their bodies along the valley, which is also not in the kids' version. But is what happened. And Psalm 56 assumes. That victory. It's carrying that victory into the text. And you got to know that. David was anointed by Samuel. He had a big moment in his life where God helped him take down the key enemy of the Philistines and that kind of shaped the trajectory of the war.

And as you might imagine, David got very popular after that. He went from Saul's guitar player to Israel's f you know fanboy. He was he was the man. In fact, this is a picture of the girls singing. They're like the cheerleaders. And when David would come home from battle, they were like Saul has killed his thousands, but David has killed his tens of thousands. And so everybody's like, David's way better than Saul, huh, right? And Saul, which by the way, he probably didn't look like this. It's very Roman. He was not Roman.

But he's jealously looking on David in 1 Samuel 18 9. Saul watched David jealously from that day forward. And remember, Saul was evil in the eyes of the Lord. Saul knew something wasn't right. He had the Spirit of God had left him. He sees this new kid, anointed by the Lord, rising up in power. He's a threat to my throne, so I'm going to take him out, even

though he's my best soldier, and I really like his guitar playing. He tries to kill David two times with his own hand, throws a spear at him, misses both times.

After he fell twice, he sends men to David's house to sit on it while him and his wife are there to try to figure out how to kill David. When that's not successful. They craft a plan to pursue David until they kill him. And David actually flees from the king's palace. To Ramah, which is where Samuel was. Remember, Samuel's the guy that anointed him. And you can see he goes from Gibeah, that's where the kingdom is, he goes all the way up here to Ramah and tells Samuel You know, I don't know.

You know, I remember the whole anointing thing and you said I was going to have something special. All I know is the actual king of Israel is trying to kill me and Samuel Works with him, they go back to Gibeah, and while they're there, the king kicks him out of the royal court, the king strips him of all power and prestige, the king slanders him, lies about him, turns all of David's friends against him. Makes him persona non grata and David literally has nowhere else to go so he flees from Gibeah down to Nob where a bunch of priests were and even when he shows up the priests are like, you know, I don't know if we want you here.

And David was like, no, I'm being sent from Saul. He actually lies. He says Saul sent me on a battle. I need a weapon and I need some bread. And the priests were like, well, we don't have any bread except the bread of the presence, which is like holy bread, but here you go anyway. And the only weapon we have is Goliath's sword. Have you heard of it? And David said, oh, there's nothing like it. Give it to me. And so he takes Goliath's sword, and that day David fled from Saul's presence and went to the king Achish of Gath.

So he's got Goliath's sword and he's leaving Nob all the way to Goliath's hometown in Gath. To present himself to the king. Now why in the world would David think that's an idea? I have no idea. Maybe he thought the king will see my value and he'll give me safe passage, or maybe he was out of his mind. I'm not sure. But that's the background of Psalm 56. Alright? Psalm 56 hangs on the anointing by Saul, the victory over Goliath, the fact that he's carrying the sword that he obtained after killing Goliath and the persecution that he had been experienced from Saul, the actual king of Israel.

So he gets to Gath, he is going to present himself to the king, but as he does the servants figure it out. Hey, this is David. He's got Goliath's sword. This is the guy those girls are singing about when they say a thousand and ten thousand. He's the ten thousand. This guy's a threat. And David figures out they know who I am, they know I'm a threat, and he became very afraid of king Achish of Gath. And so he presented himself as an insane person. He pretended to be insane in their presence and he acted like a madman around them, scribbling on the doors of the city gate and letting saliva run down his beard.

He's I can't remember the movie with the guys writing like that. Robin Williams does a great job on it. But that's what David's doing. He's pretending to be absolutely Rain Man. He's pretending to be absolutely crazy. And the king sees that and he's like, this guy's no threat. This guy's a crazy person. Get him out of here. He says, this guy's crazy. Why did you bring him to me? Do I have a shortage of crazy people? No. Why did you bring this crazy guy to me? Is he also going to come live in my house?

Which makes me think he has some crazy uncles and relatives who are living with him. And so David left Gath and he took refuge in the cave of Adullam. Now, why do I mention all that? Because somewhere between David fearing for his life and David being delivered by God From Gath to the cave of Adullam, this psalm got pent. And it as it anticipates David's deliverance out of Gath. So he's here the king says, you're crazy, get out of here. So David goes to the cave of Adullam. And what happens at the cave of Adullam?

We don't have time to read it, but David gets a small glimmer of hope. Because his mom and his dad finds out where he's at, he goes and visits him. And then 400 other Israelite men come and join David at that cave. They fortified the defenses. They needed money, so they were willing to fight, or they had a grievance against king Saul, and they were willing to fight. But the point is David was no longer alone. So somewhere between that dark pit of despair and this small little flicker of hope, Psalm 56 gets penned.

Okay, now do you understand why it's important? To know the context of Psalm 56 so that Psalm 56 makes sense. So with that in view, let's read Psalm 56. Be gracious to me, God, for a man is trampling me. No joke. He fights and oppresses me all day long. My adversaries trample me all day, for many arrogantly fight against me. When I'm afraid, I will trust in you, in God whose word I praise, and God I trust I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? They twist my words all day long, all their thoughts against me are evil.

They stir up strife, they lurk, they watch my steps while they wait to take my life. I imagine he was imagining his home getting sat on by those soldiers. Will they escape in spite of such sin? God, bring down the nations in wrath. You yourself have recorded my wanderings. Put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book? Then my enemies will retreat on the day when I call. This I know God is for me. And God whose word I praise, and the Lord whose word I praise, and God I trust I will not be afraid.

What can mere humans do to me I'm obligated by vows to you, God. I will make my thanksgiving sacrifices to you, for you rescued me from death, even my feet from stumbling, to walk before God in the light of life. You can just imagine, right, David, huddled up in a dungeon, writing these words, hurried, hassled, confused. God, what are you doing? This is this is this is crazy. And the main idea of the Psalm is right there in verse 3 when it says, when I am afraid, I will trust in you.

And it's a really powerful reminder that confronts an assumption that a lot of people have wrongly. And I've even been guilty myself of saying things like this and I and I shouldn't, this idea that fear and faith can't exist in the same human heart. FDR, another great quote, said courage is not the absence of fear. Courage is the will to triumph over it. And I think that's also true of faith. Faith is not the absence of fear. Faith is the ability to put fear in its proper place. You can have faith and feel fear at the same time.

David is teaching us as much in Psalm 56. It's not if I get afraid no, I'm afraid. And the fact that I'm afraid there is a response to that fear of faith that I'm going to trust in you. And when you put your faith over your fear, you put fear in its proper place, and it no longer has the impact that it previously had in your life. Now, how does David do that? Well, David does that, interestingly enough, with another question. It's a rhetorical question that shows up two different times.

In Psalm 56. The first time it shows up is in verse 4. The second time it shows up is in verse 11. In verse 4 he says, what can mere mortals do to me? And then in verse 11 he says what can mere humans do to me two different Hebrew words, same basic idea. And again, it's like a bracket. That's how you know that Psalm 56 is what's called a Hebrew chiasm, where the main point of the Psalm is at the very center. Of the of the unit and these brackets kind of make their way to that.

So you have these brackets about God's word and then you have the brackets of these questions and the question is what can man do to me? And that's a great question. And if you think about that question in relationship to your fear, what can man, what can mortals do to me? My immediate answer is they can do a lot. They can kill me, right? And they were going to kill him in Gath. That's why he started to act crazy. Man can slander me, man can say all kinds of evil things against me, man can chase me from my house to all these different places, man can make my marriage very strained because my wife is fearing for her life.

Man can do all sorts of things, but what David learned in Gath wasn't what man can do. He learned what man can't do. In other words, there's certain things that are true about God and that are true about me that I need to remember if I want to put my fear in its place. In other words, whatever you fear, whether it's a person or an event or a inability or disease, whatever you fear has a limit. There are certain things that fear cannot do, is what this psalm is saying. And when you begin to understand the limits of your fear, it enables you to put your fear in its proper place.

As an act of faith. Now what are the things that man can't do according to this psalm? Is there at least three, maybe more. We'll go through them very quickly because we're running out of time. Man can't change God's word, man can't cover up what God sees, and then man can't control. He can't control who God saves. And let me show you this in the Psalm, and I want

to encourage you to go home and study it more because we don't have time to really unpack it. But number one, man, God's your fears can't.

It can't change what God says. And you notice that in this psalm, because of this, again the bracket, he says, in God whose word I praise, in verse 4. And then again in verse 10, in God whose word I praise, in the Lord whose word I praise. There's this emphasis on the word of God and praising the word of God. And what David is saying is, whatever these men can do. And when that's a lot, they can kill my body, but the one thing they can't do is they can't change the word of God.

And they and when it comes to fear for you and I, fear can make you forget God's word. Fear can make you doubt or question God's word. Fear can make it so that you don't really read or engage with the word of God because of, you know, you think you got to make money or be popular or whatever. Fear can do a lot of things to the word of God, but the one thing it cannot do is it cannot erase God's word. It cannot change God's word, it cannot undo God's word, and because it can't change God's word, that puts your fear in a different category in terms of where it sits in your heart.

Now, what is the Word of God according to David? Well, it's not this, right? David didn't have 66 books of the Bible, because half of it, more than half, hadn't been written yet. But what David did have was the first five books of the Old Testament. I used to think David's word was the word from Samuel. It's okay, David, you're going to be king. It's kind of like if you knew your death date, I'm not going to die till 2045. I'd be like, let's. Go you know skydiving, let's do all the cool things.

I'm going to ride the roller coaster six flags, which I weirdly have a phobia of getting on roller coasters, but I wouldn't care, right? I would do whatever because I can't dive. But that's not what's happening, even though a lot of preachers say it is. It's not what's happening because Samuel never tells David you're going to be king. God tells Samuel David's going to be king, but David but Samuel never says it to David and not once have I seen where God says to David I'm going to make you king, just hang in there.

David might have assumed it. David might have presumed it. Maybe Samuel told him later and it's not recorded in scripture. But the word I don't believe is a prophetic word about David being king. The word I believe is the first five books of the Old Testament. It's David's awareness that when God makes a promise, God keeps a promise. And we've seen this as we study the book of Genesis Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah, every one of those men. They suffered adversity. They had difficult days. They weren't always deserving of what they got.

But when God made a promise, he kept the promise every single time. And that God has a covenant purpose and that he chooses people to advance that covenant purpose. And when

you are the person being used by God to advance his covenant purposes, you can take it to the bank that what he said will come to pass will come to pass. He got Jacob from his mom and dad's house back to mom and dad's house decades later. He got Abraham from where he was in Ur of the Chaldeans to the promised land.

He brought Joseph from the pit of the dungeon to the second chair of Egypt. God keeps his promises. And when David says, based on what I know of the word of God, My fear can't change those truths. Which means, for you and me, if it's true that your fears can't change the Word of God, the most important thing for you to do is to get your face in God's Word, right? To know the Word of God, which is so ironic because today the Word of God is more accessible than it's ever been.

More easier to understand than it's ever been. There's so many free resources, and yet even though all that's true, the Word of God is less engaged with today, even by Christians. Than it has ever been before. It is a crying shame that even Christian people who say I love Jesus and I'm going to heaven when I die never read the Bible. Do not be one of those Christians. Some of you are going to be super shocked when you get to heaven and you're like, no way, that's in there. I didn't know.

That's so cool. And they'll be like, oh, that you would have read that earlier. It could have helped you through X, Y, or Z situation, but you suffered from a lack of knowledge because you wouldn't read the Word of God. That's why we're doing the campaign. That's why we're giving everybody these free CSB Psalm Scripture journals. That's why we came up with the reading plan. That's why with the reading plan you've got these daily devotionals that kind of explain the text so that you don't have to like you know stab in the dark and wonder what it's like.

We're trying to take every excuse away because when you listen to me when you dedicate yourself to reading the word of God, your knowledge of God will increase because knowledge of God comes from through revelation of his word. He's inspired the scripture to show you who he is and how he works in the world. And when your knowledge of God increases, your fears begin to decrease because you recognize the reality that whatever that fear is it cannot change these truths of God. I can take it to the bank. As pastor David used to say, one positive assertion denies all negative assumptions.

If God says it, that settles it, and I'm going to believe what he's spoken. But it doesn't just not change God's word, it also doesn't control, it doesn't cover up what God sees. And that's in verses 5 to 7 it's David says they twist my words all day long, they stir up thoughts. Their thoughts against me are evil. They stir up strife, they lurk, they watch my steps, while they wait to take my life. Will they escape in spite of such sin? God, bring down the nations in wrath. You yourself have recorded my wanderings.

Put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book? David is reminding himself of a specific truth about God, namely, you see it all. You see everything. And he's he breaks it down into two categories. Number one, he sees the wrongs that are committed against me. He sees them slander me. He sees them twist their words or twist my words. He sees how Saul has turned my friends against me. He sees them sitting on my house, making my wife afraid. But he also sees the misery it causes. In verse 7, you see my wanderings.

If you look at a footnote there, it'll tell you that Hebrew word is the word for miseries. God, you see the pain their actions have caused me. He says, put my tears in a bottle. Are they not in your book? They had a custom back then during funerals. That they would take the tears of the grieving person and they would bottle them up. And that bottle of tears was a symbol or a representation of all of the grief that that person experienced due to the loss of that spouse or whoever it was.

And David is saying, you have a bottle. You keep track of my suffering. You keep track of my tears. You see everything. You see the wrongs that they commit against me and you see the pain that it causes me. And I am comforted by the fact that you see it all. They cannot cover it up. And because they can't hide from their sin. And because my misery can't hide from what you see, I know that you will also see justice is served. That's what he says in verse 7. Will they escape in spite of such a sin?

Answer no. God's going to bring wrath on the nations, the ethnē, the gentiles. Then verse 9, my enemies will retreat on the day when I call. This I know God is for me. God will see that justice is served. And that helps you manage your fears. When you are being oppressed and maligned and accused and slandered, and I can't tell you the number of times that as a pastor people misrepresent your motives or say things about you that aren't true. And there's a desire to try to defend yourself and protect yourself.

But at the end of the day, the comfort that comes from passages like these that say God understands, God sees it, you're accountable ultimately to him and no one else, and he is your defender, and ultimately the truth comes out. When you when you s when you believe that, based on what you know of God's word, it puts fear in its place because it can't change God's word and it can't cover up what God sees, which leads to the last thing, and then we're done. It can't control who God's who's God who God is going to save.

He says, I'm obligated by my vows to you. We don't know what these vows were or when they were made, but he made some kind of promise to God. As we might have done, you know, God, if you get me through this, I'll I'll serve you the rest of my days. I will make my sa thanksgiving sacrifices to you, for you rescued me from death, even my feet from stumbling, to walk before God in the light of life. David is so confident in God's salvation, not because he was worthy or sinless or any of those things.

David is able to say, God, you're on my side. You are for me because I'm for you. And a lot of us get it mixed. God, I want you to fight my battle. God, would you be on my side? They're bad. I'm good. That's not how the Lord works. Your job is to know the word of God, know where God's side is on any given situation. Now that I'm walking in the will of God, when I walk in the will of God and people resist me, God's going to fight them.

I don't have to, because they're fighting God. And that's what David is saying here. And so all I have to do is worship. And your fears cannot keep you from worshipping the Lord, just as your fears cannot determine or control who God is going to save and deliver. And that's why sometimes we sing the song praise is a weapon. Praise is a weapon that will overcome. I'm going to fight like the battle's won. Fall back, devil, your time is done. I'm going to sing like the stone is gone. Is that it?

Gone, gone. Now my sin is dead and gone. David is praising the Lord and so we man we don't have time to talk about it. But there is a psalm. That David wrote a song of worship that David wrote during the same time. It's Psalm 34. And if you read Psalm 34, we don't have time to read the whole thing. I just want to give you a tiny little taste. This was the psalm that David was singing praising the Lord because of his deliverance that had happened in the past, but it was certain in the future, not because I'm good, but because God is good and I'm on God's side, advancing his covenant promises.

He says, I will bless the Lord at all times His praise will ever be on my lips. I'll never forget I was at a board meeting for LifeWay and there was a lady who opened up her prayer. I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise will ever be on my lips. And she said those words from a place of deep suffering deep pain. Just like David was in a place of deep suffering, his praise will ever be on my lips. I will boast in the Lord, the humble will hear and be glad.

Proclaim the Lord's greatness with me. Let's exalt his name together, because I sought the Lord. And he answered me. He rescued me from all my fears. That's what praise looks like in the face of fear. I sought the Lord and he answered me and he rescued me from my fears. And what's so fascinating about Psalm 34, even though it's written by David, it actually points to the greater David, the Lord Jesus Christ. It closes with these words. The one who is righteous has many adversities, but the Lord rescues him from them all.

He protects all of his bones. Not one of them is broken. This is a prophecy about Jesus In John's gospel it says that not one of Jesus' bones was broken by the Romans during the crucifixion to fulfill the prophecy of Psalm thirty-four, which is actually fulfilling a prophecy of the Passover Lamb, whose whose legs were not broken as they made the atoning sacrifice. Evil brings death to the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be punished. The Lord redeems the life of his servants, and all who take refuge in him will not be punished.

So, what's that saying? It's saying that Psalm 34, Psalm 56, all the Psalms, all the scripture is pointing to the greater sufferer, the greater Messiah, the greater Lamb, and that's the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you read Psalm 56 in light of those things, Jesus on the cross, can you not hear Jesus say, all day long they trample me? They lie and wait, they twist my words against me, they wait and look to capture me and kill me. Jesus said all of those things. And it ultimately led Jesus to a Roman cross.

And when you look at the cross, all of those things that David saw. You see even more clearly, Jesus is the word of God spoken, the better word. That when you see what God is revealed through Jesus, his word, you begin to realize what God is like, that He is for me, not against me, that He is abounding in faithful love, that He is merciful and kind, that He is a God who forgives, who protects and provides. At the cross you also see what God sees in terms of our sin and our wickedness.

The cross reveals that every wrong committed against you will have its payday. Justice will be served. God is a holy God, He is a just God, and wrongs will be righted. And the cross demonstrates that because Jesus is absorbing the wrath of God for our sins. The sins that are committed against us, but also the sins that we committed against another. And you see that at the cross, you see your sin, but you also see God's mercy and his forgiveness and his compassion and his grace. And you see that God is a God who loves you enough to sympathize with you in your pain and your suffering.

That he wept at the tomb of Lazarus, that he knows your pain and what it means for your life and he's near the brokenhearted. He binds up their wounds and you know that's true when you look to the cross of Jesus Christ. Because he's he's David, he's the greater David. And when you look to the cross, you see God's commitment to save. And he doesn't save people who are more moral or more holy or more whatever, who go to church. He saves people who trust in him. He saves the people who say, God, I need your mercy.

God, I need your grace. It's not about what I want. It's not my kingdom, not about my agenda. It's about your kingdom, your agenda, your covenant. I'm going to put myself underneath the umbrella of that agenda. And I can have certainty, even if I'm not worthy, you will deliver me because I'm with you. I'm not asking you to be with me. I'm asking. Can I be with you? And the way that you can be with the Lord is through repentance and faith in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And when you look to the cross, you see that.

You see his word spoken. You see his love for you and his willingness in his great love for you to atone for your sin and his promise you will be saved. If you will but repent of your sin and trust in the Lord. And when you do that, your fears will die. Your fears will die at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ. I don't know how to explain it, but when you draw near to the cross and you see those glorious truths about God from His Word, His living Word, Jesus Christ.

Your fear will fade. It doesn't mean it goes away, but it is rightly ordered in your heart so that you can continue to walk by faith. And faith enables you to put your fear where it ultimately belongs. So I'm going to invite us to do that now as we respond in this invitation time. If you've never made Jesus Lord of your life, I want to invite you to do that. You can indicate that decision in your worship guide. You can indicate it on the Connect card. You can also use this time to pray and ask the Lord to give you wisdom and discernment on what obedience looks like.

But let's do that now as the Lord leads. Father, we thank you for this time in your word, and we thank you, Jesus, that you are the fulfillment of every promise in Psalm 56? That you are the suffering servant of Psalm 34. That you are the one who allowed yourself to be maligned and persecuted and murdered and put on a Roman cross all so that we could say, like David said, God is for me, not against me. That we can have the creator of the universe be our defender and our protector.

And our provider, not because we deserve it, but because he has made a way for us to receive it as a gift of his grace and his mercy. If we would just repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And so where there is unbelief in our heart and where that unbelief has increased the fear in our life. Would you give us eyes to see and hearts to believe the promises of your word, the truth of your love and compassion? And that that would shrink those fears. It would cripple our fears instead of fear crippling us.

And we pray that you would do that in our heart during this time of response. And we pray it in Jesus' name.