

PSALMS

songs for all of life

Psalms: Wait for It

August 13, 2023

Jonah Easley

Psalm 57: 1 - 7

Good morning, Doxa. Today we'll be reading out of Psalm chapter 57: 1-7.

"To the choir master, according to, do not destroy. A Miktam of David, when he fled from Saul, in the cave. Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by. I cry out to God most high, to God who fulfills his purpose for me. He will send from heaven and save me; he will put to shame him who tramples on me. Selah. God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness! My soul is in the midst of lions; I lie down amid fiery beasts-the children of man, whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth! They set a net for my steps; my soul was bowed down. They dug a pit in my way, but they have fallen into it themselves. Selah. My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast! I will sing and make melody!"

This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated.

Thank you, Emma. All right, well, I have the pleasure to introduce our guest speaker. Now, if you know, and you've been around Doxa this summer, we've been preaching through Psalms, and we are in a series called the Psalms for All of Life. And we have been recruiting some of our friends who are pastors around the Puget Sound to join us. And some of those Sundays I've been gone preaching at their churches. And this Sunday I have the privilege to sit underneath my friend's preaching, Jonah Easley. Now Jonah is the pastor at the Awakening Church. And the Awakening Church has been all over the Eastside. And right now they are gathering in Kirkland. He and his wife Kathy though, their experience in ministry goes beyond the five years he's been the pastor and church- planter at Awakening.

You see, they actually go back all the way even to China, where Jonah-I don't know if you know this-planting a church, a Christian Church in China is not a fun thing to try to do. Just going out on a limb. So what he had to do was he actually started a coffee shop as a front for their church planting ministry. And he learned Mandarin there, he and his wife, and did ministry in China and have since moved back to the States by way of Texas and has come up here in 2017 to plant the Awakening Church.

So, Jonah, will you join me on stage? Would you join me in welcoming Pastor Jonah Easley to the stage? One of the great things about-thanks for being here, man-one of the best things about doing ministry in a place like this is getting to partner with other leaders and other pastors. And Jonah and I have been in a counseling ministry together, a counseling cohort together. We've got to do some stuff like that, but also for Doxa and for the Awakening, we want to be fantastic and wonderful representation of what it means to be the Capital "C" Church. There's only one church here in the Puget Sound. It's Jesus' Church, the one true church, and we're all a part of it. So, we're thankful for you. Do you mind if I pray for you? Yeah, please. Thanks.

Well, Lord, thank you for Jonah and his commitment to you going across the world to do ministry, coming all the way back home to the south, to Texas, Lord. And even now where he calls home the Eastside here. And so I pray for the Awakening, their influence, Lord God, that they might influence those that are new to the area, those that are dyed-in-the-wool and been here forever. And also, that our churches, both Doxa and Awakening, could be good and wonderful representations of what it means to follow you. We love you and praise you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Thank you, Pastor Eddie. And thank you Doxa Church. It's so great to be with you today. My name's Jonah Easley and I'm the pastor of Awakening Church. As Pastor Eddie just told you, we moved here in 2017. I planted Awakening Church in 2018 and have been in the fight ever since. But when we first moved here, Doxa was our home. We called Doxa home before we launched services and those types of things. So coming to be with you guys today is really awesome for me because you encouraged our family so much in that process. But I'm so thankful for Pastor Eddie and the Doxa family. God is using you in incredible ways on the Eastside and beyond for his kingdom's impact.

Well, we're in the book of Psalms. So Pastor Eddie said, Hey man, come preach through Psalms. What do you want to preach on? So I prayed about that and Psalm 57 hit my heart. But we're going to begin today in First Samuel chapter 24, looking at the life of David. So if you have a copy of God's word, I invite you to, to get going, finding that book. So David's story reads like a good news, bad news story. You know what I'm talking about. Like the story of the two friends who made a deal, they said, Hey, whoever dies first, the other one has to come back to tell me if there's baseball in heaven. I mean, it's a good question. Everybody needs to know that. Well, sure enough, one of the guys dies and he comes back the next day to talk to his friend and say, Hey, good news, there's baseball in heaven. Bad news, you're pitching on Friday.

So, David's life is kind of like that. It's a good news, bad news story. And we all see this start in First Samuel 16 when Samuel shows up to anoint David as King. Man, awesome news, great news. But after that, he gets sent back into the sheep pasture where he's forgotten about for several years. So that's the bad news. Then David wins this epic battle. Maybe you've heard of it against this guy named Goliath. He becomes a national hero, marries the king's daughter, gets a job on Capitol Hill, all great news. But then King Saul turns out to be an egomaniac and tries to kill David five times with a spear. Crazy news. Okay, not so good. Then he gives his wife to someone else, trashes his reputation, and then puts out a warrant for David's arrest and says, Hey, I'll pay a bounty-anybody that brings him back, dead or alive. Bad news, right?

Just as David presses through one challenge in his life, we think, oh, there's got to be some light at the end of the tunnel. You think things are about to improve for him, but he's greeted with another obstacle. Maybe you can relate to that. This raises a very important question, one that we'll focus in on today. What do you do when your path turns unexpectedly for the worst? Your career hits a snag. You're like, man, I didn't see that coming. Everything was good. Or maybe you're like, career snag? I can't even think about that. My career's never gotten off the ground. I can't even get a job. Maybe your kid starts to have some troubles in middle school, eating disorders, depression, bad behavior. Maybe there's a diagnosis that you didn't see coming in your life, your kid's life. Maybe you're not married. You thought, hey, by this age, certainly I'll be married. And things just aren't adding up that way.

Maybe you are married, but what you thought marriage was and what you currently have, there's this huge gap in between those two things. Maybe you're divorced and you thought, man, I never thought in a million years that I'd be somebody that that could happen to. So the question again, what do you do when life takes this unexpected negative turn that you weren't expecting?

I want to use the stories of David today to warn you against a temptation that we tend to fall into in moments just like that. And that is, to take matters into our own hands. That's our temptation. This is a significant theme in the Bible. In fact, we see almost every character in the Bible go through a similar story. And we're going to look at David today. So in First Samuel 24, we're about to jump into it, but because of Saul's murderous egomania, David has been forced to flee into the wilderness. He's on the run. King Saul gets some intelligence that, hey, I think I know where David's hiding. He's in the hills and the caves of En Gedi.

So let's see what happens in verse two. "Then Saul took 3000 chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Wildgoats' Rocks. And he came to the sheep folds by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went into the cave to relieve himself." Okay? The literal Hebrew in this verse means, it says, Saul went into the cave to cover his feet, tracking with me? Which is a euphemism for doing number two. So I'll let you figure out how that phrase indicates that, but then we'll keep going.

"Now, David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave." Talk about an awkward moment, right?

Okay, maybe that's normal for you, not for me. So David and some of his men, they're hiding in a cave and Saul goes into that cave without his bodyguards to pop a squat. Alright? So this couldn't have been a pleasant experience at all. Think about this. This cave is dark, it's dank, there's no ventilation. And continue verse four, "But the men of David said to him, Here is the day of which the Lord said to you, behold, I will give your enemy into your hand and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you." I mean, there's hardly a more vulnerable position that a man can be in, right? That's true. Saul's over there all by himself. No bodyguards around, pants around his ankles, reading the newspaper. Listen, I didn't write it, I'm just the deliverer of the message. And the men are like, David, now is your moment. Wow!

Verse four continues, "And then David arose..." This word in Hebrew, arose, it indicates decision. So David grabs a knife presumably to go up and kill Saul. This is his moment. David was coming up behind Saul, holding his nose, and he thinks, Hey wait, this is murder. This is murder. Even if God has put Saul right here before me, taking his life would be wrong. Can I just pause here and say that coincidences are not always a sign that God is behind something. I say that because it's incredible how many people would justify a moment, a decision, a life choice, some behavior, because of some coincidence that happens. We think, oh, my marriage really isn't working out that well, but I met this person at work who's just perfect. It just feels too coincidental. Must be fate.

Now, I'm not saying that God never uses coincidences to direct us, but sometimes coincidences are just that, a coincidence. However, there's one thing that you can always count on. You can always count on the word of God to guide you. So the first and foremost consideration in David's mind in this moment is not, Hey, what are the circumstances directing me to do? They are what does God's word say? And for the record, God is not the only one who arranges coincidences in your life. Satan does that too.

So David's temptation, it follows a pattern. Satan tempts David to take matters into his own hands. And he even uses scripture in the process. Did you see that? This is incredible. David's men are quoting scripture to urge him to kill Saul. They say in verse four, "And the men of David said to him, here is the day of which the Lord said to you, behold, I will give your enemy into your hand." They're using scripture. This is how Satan tempted Jesus as well. Satan took Jesus to the pinnacle of the city and he said, God wants to give you all of this. Just take a look. He wants to give you all of this. And listen, that was true. God was going to give him all of that. But then Satan said, I can give all of this to you right now. If you just take this little shortcut, just take a shortcut. You won't have to go to the cross, you won't have to suffer and go through all of that mess. You can have it right now. It's just a little shortcut, no big deal. Go get it for yourself. This is what Satan does. Satan starts with a truth. He holds up something that God wants you to have and then urges you to step outside of God's will to get it, to take a shortcut.

Think about it. In the Garden of Eden, what happened there? Satan said that God wants you to be happy and have God-like wisdom. And that's true. God does want those things for us. But he said to get there, I'll show you a shortcut. Just take a little bite of this fruit.

You'll have it right now. To Abraham Satan said, God has promised to make you a father of a great nation. And that was true. But he said, but Abe, you're childless, your wife, she's old. But look at Hagar, you could take this little shortcut and we'll see what can happen. Step outside of God's will and take it. You see the pattern here? The temptation is to pursue the promises of the spirit, the promises of God by the power of the flesh, by stepping outside of the will of God. And to that, I'll say, you never find God's will doing things your way instead of his.

Watch what David does. David crawls right up behind him. And verse four continues, "...stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe. And afterward David's heart struck him because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe." David felt guilty even for doing that. I'm sure his buddies were giving him a really hard time. Like, man, you could have just solved all of our problems. We wouldn't have to hide anymore and all you did was this and you feel bad about that. Come on man. Verse six, "He said to his men, the Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord's anointed." Listen, even if Saul is in the wrong, David said, God appointed him as king. God has appointed these circumstances and it's not for me to take matters into my own hands. I cannot achieve God's purposes by breaking God's commands. Think about this, killing Saul would've solved a lot of problems and David could have justified it. He could have framed it as self-defense. He could have done a lot of things to get away with it. But David knew you never achieve God's purposes by breaking God's commands. Never. Never.

So, verse seven, "David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul..." So Saul finishes up his business and exits the cave. And David waits a few minutes until Saul is just a little distance away and then calls out to Saul from the mouth of the cave. Verse eight, "My Lord the king! And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth and paid homage." Like rubbing it in a little bit, I think.

Verse nine, "And David said to Saul, why do you listen to the words of men who say, behold, David seeks your harm. Behold, this day your eyes have seen how the Lord gave you today into my hand in the cave, and some told me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, I will not put out my hand against my lord for he is the Lord's anointed. See, my Father, see the corner of your robe in my hand." As holds it up. Wow! "For by the fact that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it. May the Lord judge between me and you, may the Lord avenge me against you, but my hand shall not be against you. As the proverb of these ancient says, Out of the wicked comes wickedness." In other words, your sin does not justify mine. Just because you did a wicked thing against me doesn't mean that I can do a wicked thing against you. That would make me wicked, regardless of what you did to provoke that.

Then David finishes his monologue with this plea. Verse 14, "After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? After a dead dog! After a flea! He's saying, listen, I'm no threat to you at all. Verse 16, "And as soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, is this your voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. He said to

David, you are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil." Verse 19, "...may the Lord reward you with good for what you've done to me this day. And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. Swear to me therefore by the Lord that you'll not cut off my offspring after me, and that you'll not destroy my name out of my father's house. And David swore this to Saul. Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold."

Notice that David did not go back with Saul. Now it looked like Saul had repented. He said he was sorry. He asked for forgiveness. He cried about it. He even acknowledged, Hey David, you're going to be king one day. It's going to happen. Yet David still went back to the stronghold. Now this isn't a major part of the story, but I think it's worth pointing out because maybe somebody needs to hear it today. Just because someone says they're sorry and you forgive them, doesn't mean you can always just go back to normal right away. When you've been abused, when you've been hurt, someone simply saying, I'm sorry, and even shedding tears about it doesn't mean you're obligated to move back immediately. There can be, and often should be, a good time gap. Let some time go by to see and show if repentance is genuine and will endure.

So David wisely says, Hey, I forgive you, but I'm going to stay here for a while. You go on back. Which brings us back to the question, what do you do when your path takes an unexpected turn for the worst? You have two choices. Choice number one, you take control. You take things into your own hands. Choice number two, you can do the hardest thing in the Bible. You can trust God and wait on his timing. Those are our choices. Taking matters into our own hands, the things that we usually do, ends up looking like some different shortcuts. And I see four of them here. Simple shortcuts that we can probably categorize every shortcut, every time we take it into our own hands will look like. And the first one is rationalized revenge.

Everybody likes revenge. My kids came out of the womb liking revenge. You hit me; I'm going to hit you back. David's men urged him to settle the score. David, now is your moment. Take your knife. Kill him now. His pants around his ankles, get him. It's the way it happens. It almost always feels right on some level. Your wife doesn't appreciate you and respect you, so you cheat on her. Your boss, he's been a jerk to you, so you do sloppy work. You find ways to undermine him. You might even steal from the company. No big deal. You deserve it. Maybe you cheat a little bit on your taxes 'cause you think, man, the government they don't spend my money wisely anyway. What's the big deal? These all feel justified because of the wrong that you've endured. It just feels right. But out of the wicked comes wickedness.

What other shortcuts are there? Stolen pleasures. It's your second one. Stolen pleasures. Life hasn't delivered for you, so you find some escape and some stolen pleasure. I can't but help think about Joseph in the Old Testament. He went through a lot. Brothers selling him into slavery. He's lied about. Then Potiphar's wife propositions him. I can't but help think in that moment of him thinking, you know what, my life has gone pretty bad so far. I deserve this. And maybe that's what it is for you. Maybe an affair has become an escape of pleasure in an unfair world. Or maybe you find an escape in a bottle or through looking at porn or through

retail therapy, just shopping, scrolling, buying. What's it hurting anyway, right? My family, my boss, whoever. My life is stressful. You know I need this. God seems to just have forgotten me altogether. Where is God anyway? At least I have this. We can justify it.

Next shortcut. Cowardly compromise. You think, you know God's not delivering? Where are you? I'll just take matters into my own hands like Abraham did with Hagar. You're not married yet, so you think, you know, God hasn't brought this perfect partner to me yet, so I'll just date somebody I know I probably shouldn't be dating 'cause it's better than being alone. Or financially you're not where you want to be so you overwork, make sacrifices. Sacrifice your family. Maybe you stop tithing. God's not moving fast enough on your timetable and you're like, listen, I'll do this myself. Which leads to the last one. Fearful presumption.

Fearful presumption. Because God's not delivering on your timetable, you begin to manipulate circumstances pushing your way forward. Now I know type A people, they're behind the scenes. They're making things happen. They're getting it done, making decisions. Let's go. I get it. They don't take no for an answer. And sometimes that's a good thing, but not all the time. Sometimes you're doing that because you're not waiting for God. Your behavior becomes unhealthy, obsessive manipulative. Maybe through self-promotion, you're just not content to wait on God's timing, so you force ahead. You manipulate situations or you leverage relationships. You're not going to wait. Maybe you subtly tear someone else down so you will be elevated. Or if someone doesn't do what you want, you just try to guilt them into doing it. Shame them into doing it. I saw it happen just a minute about the backpacks. You got 40 to go. Come on guys, the backpacks, you with me? Get your backpacks. In all these things I'm trying to complete in the power of my flesh, what only God can do in the spirit.

These things are the opposite of what David did. David said, I will not stretch out my hand in wickedness against God's anointed, no matter how justified I feel. I will wait upon the Lord. I will do things his way. He's the one that made these promises. He's the shepherd to whom I've committed my soul. I will wait for him. Let's say that together, that phrase, I will wait upon the Lord. Let's say it. I will wait upon the Lord. Listen, that one phrase could change so much about your life, so much about your life. If you're looking for somebody to date, say it. I will wait upon the Lord. After all, God gives his best to those who leave the choice to him.

If you're in a bad job, I will wait upon the Lord. If financially you're not where you want to be right now, I want to wait on the Lord in that. If you're in the pasture wondering when God's going to put you in the game, I will wait upon the Lord. Maybe your marriage isn't where it should be. I will wait upon the Lord. Maybe your kids aren't doing what they're supposed to be doing. I will wait upon the Lord. And let me be clear, by waiting on the Lord I don't mean sitting around and doing nothing. I'm not talking about inactivity here. David is very active in these chapters. We see it all through his story, isn't he? He's pressing in. He's protecting himself by running. He's pleading with God. When he has an opportunity to plead his case before Saul, he does it. He just does so from a posture of trust and he refuses to compromise and he refuses to sin. Waiting on the Lord is a very active thing.

Think about it this way. Have you ever eaten at a true five star restaurant? Yeah? No one eats at restaurants? Okay, there's these things called restaurants and there's really nice ones. And there's ratings by stars and nice ones are five stars. Okay? Service is really good. Food's real good. You should try it. Anyway, I've been able to do this on a few occasions, special occasions, that kind of thing. And one waiter, I think one of the first times ever experienced this, the waiter was like right there the whole time. I'm sitting here, me and my beautiful wife, and he's like staring at us the whole time. Not too close to listen, but you know, just far enough away, a little creepy. But he's like watching, listening, reading my mind, okay. I'm thinking I really need some pepper. And he shows up like, sir, would you like some fresh ground pepper or the malted Mediterranean blend? I'm like, what? What are you talking about right now? Listen, he was very attentive, but he's my waiter. He's waiting on me. Attentively, actively doing everything that I'm communicating and even thinking.

The opposite, going back to the stars, like one star or less, we're going to talk about a place like Denny's, okay? Anybody know what Denny's is? Oh, good, you've been there. A lot of Denny's fans in here. Listen, In Denny's, I could spontaneously burst into flames and no one in the place would notice. Alright? They just have a lot going on. They're busy, they're multitasking, they're cleaning the bathrooms, they're taking a smoke break, they're cooking the food and waiting on my table all at the same time. They're distracted, preoccupied. The point is, we're supposed to wait on God like a five-star waiter waits on us, focused on who God is, focused on what God wants us to do. I'm trusting him. I'm leaning in. I'm doing whatever he desires. If you're taking notes today, write this one down. The biggest enemy in my life is not Saul, it's my inability to wait. I would say that learning to wait might be the most essential skill in the life of a Jesus follower. Pray for the ability to wait. (*Jonah's phone rings unexpectedly*) Somebody's calling me. They need to wait.

You say, well, you know this sounds a lot easier said than done. Where do you find the resources to be a five star waiter? Well, I'm so glad that you asked that because David wrote a psalm where he tells us. You've already heard a portion of it today, but let's look at it again together. It starts out with this intro, "A Miktam of David when he fled from Saul in the cave." Sweet, Miktam. This is a Hebrew word for R&B ballad. It's cool. Look it up. And he wrote it while he's in these caves that we've just talked about. Unbelievable!

Well, let's look at it. Psalm 57 verse one, "Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you, my soul takes refuge: in the shadow of your wings, I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by. I cry out to God most high, to God who fulfills his purposes for me. He will send from heaven and save me; he will put to shame him who tramples on me. Selah." No one is entirely sure what selah in the Bible means. Most likely it's like stop and ponder, like a musical interlude, like stop right now, think about what I just said. And that's what David's telling us to do here. He says, God will send from heaven and save me and he will help me.

And verse three goes on, "God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness." Wow! What do we see in these verses? Well, the first thing that I see here in verse two is God's sovereign purpose. His sovereign purpose. Look at verse two. look at it with me. David says, I know God,

even in this cave, you have a purpose. Underline that word purpose. God has a purpose for me in this cave. Saul's not in charge here. God, you are. This means I don't have to try to control. I don't have to even respond to Saul. Wow! I just have to honor you. I just have to honor you and when I do, when I trust you with the results, I can have confidence in that because you're ultimately in charge.

For a season I had the privilege to serve on staff at First Baptist, Atlanta, Georgia, with Dr. Charles Stanley, a great man of God. And one of the principles that he instilled into my life was to obey God and leave the consequences to him. It's in his hands. Obey God. I'm trusting God. What if in every situation in your life you believe that a sovereign God with a good purpose was in charge? Would you live differently? My boss might be a jerk to me, but I don't have to respond to him. I don't have to pay him back or control him in any way. I just leave it in the hands of God. He's in charge. My spouse might be insensitive and rude, but I'm not going to respond to that. I'm going to respond to God 'cause ultimately he's in charge. Saul may not deserve your mercy, your boss, he may not deserve your integrity, your spouse, she may not deserve your kindness or your faithfulness, but let me tell you this, Jesus always does. Jesus always does. So you always respond to him first and foremost.

What else do we see in these verses? In verse three, we see steadfast love. Steadfast love. Not only does God have a purpose for me in my trial, but that purpose is also saturated with the steadfast, unchanging love of God. How would your perspective change if you believe that in all things, the sovereign God had a good purpose in it, a purpose that was woven with the threads of the steadfast love, that there wasn't one stray thread of my life out of his control. I might not always know what God's doing in my life. He might be doing 10,000 things and I'm only aware of about three of them, but he's always working. God is always at work.

Your life might feel like it's out of control saying things like, God, why would you allow this to happen? Why do I have to go through this? Why was I overlooked for the promotion? Why did my parents let me down so badly? And I can't answer every question about everything that happens in your life, but I can tell you if you have entrusted your life to Jesus, he has a loving purpose that he pursues in every moment, and in every movement forwards and backwards. It's all saturated in his love. And you're like, all right man. This is really probably easy for you to say. You don't know what I'm going through. You don't know what I've been through. Maybe I don't understand. I mean, I've got my own problems too. We all do, but perhaps you feel worse. But listen to what David says. Verse four, "My soul is in the midst of lions; I lie down amid fiery beasts-the children of man whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords."

That sounds pretty bad. David's being chased by a rabid king who used to be his friend and now wants to kill him. That's a bad thing. It's a tough moment. David knows a little bit of the anguish that you're going through. And the point is not for you to compare your issues to my issues or your issues to David's issues. Listen, suffering is not a competitive sport. We're not competing against each other here. The point is that the resources that David had, you have. What he had

in that moment, you have today. God watches over your life with sovereign purpose and steadfast love.

Look at verse seven, "My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast! I will sing and make a melody!" He's in the cave, feet away from Saul, making a joyful melody. This is a big deal. What's the song playing in your heart during suffering? Is it the melody of joy or anxious complaining? Last one. We also find steadfast confidence as we look at verse seven. Steadfast confidence. David says, my heart is steadfastly locked on you. Now don't miss this. This is the second time that David uses the word steadfast. The first time was in verse three when David describes God's commitment to him, the steadfast love of God. Now, he uses it to describe his commitment to God. And notice which one came first. David can be steadfast toward God because he knows that God is steadfast toward him. That order is critical. The secret to steadfast obedience and steadfast confidence is God's steadfast love gives us the ability.

But the opposite is true also, when you're not confident in the goodness of God, you begin to be anxious and take matters into your own hands. When you don't trust that God is just, you'll feel driven to pursue that to the point of rage. But when you know that you have a sovereign God with a purpose for you saturated in his steadfast love, here's what you can do. You can wait patiently and with steadfast confidence in him. Does that make sense?

David's steadfast obedience came from his steadfast confidence in God's steadfast love, which brings us to the most important dimension of this story. What David goes through in the cave, in that wilderness in En Gedi gives us a picture of Jesus. You see, like David, Jesus was anointed king, and like David, Jesus didn't receive that kingdom immediately. He had to wait for it. He had to go through something for it. He endured persecution, disrespect, falsely accused, crucified even. And like David, Jesus never took matters into his own hands. He waited on God. He trusted in the Father that he would do the right thing in the right time. Like David, Satan tempted Jesus—take a shortcut. But did Jesus do it? Did David do it? Nope. They refused. And like David, Jesus didn't take vengeance on his enemies even though he could have done it. He had the right to do it, opportunity to do it.

But listen, after all, in this story, we are Saul. We are Saul. We the human race, each of us has seized Jesus' throne. It belongs to him, and we are the ones trying to kill him. We're the ones that represent those in Jerusalem that day, crying out crucify him. And that's where Jesus' story and David's story diverge. Jesus did more than just spare us like David spared Saul. Jesus actually took our place so we could be forgiven and restored. If he declared his love and acceptance toward us when we were in full rebellion mode, doesn't that give you the power to move forward and trust him completely with everything in your life? It should. Some of you may hear this message today and in your heart you think, man, I need to trust God more, and if I do, maybe God will accept me and I can be sure that he'll always protect me and provide for me. But you've again gotten the order wrong. It's critical. It's not that you develop steadfast faith and then God accepts you. God accepts you, and then you develop that faith, because he accepts you. It starts with him. Our assurance of his acceptance must come first.

So when you see that this whole story is about how he came after you, how he never stopped pursuing you, loving you, accepted you in mercy when he could have killed you for treason, we can trust him. We can trust his timing.

Let's pray together. Jesus, we thank you so much for this story. We thank you for the love that you've come at us with, that we do not deserve at all. We thank you that no matter what we are going through in our lives, the circumstances around us, as hard as they are, Lord, we can trust you with them. You've allowed them for your purposes, even if we don't understand them at the time. Lord, we can trust you. Thank you for your steadfast love. I pray for those in the room that never received Jesus' offer of salvation. We pray that today they will come to the cross for forgiveness of sins, knowing that Jesus died in their place. It's in Jesus' name I pray. Amen.