

Series: Pathway Through the Psalms

LEAD ME TO THE ROCK THAT IS HIGHER THAN I PSALMS 61

Text: Psalms 61:2

Psalm 61:2

² From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

Introduction:

We all know that there are times when life just plain hurts.

There are times when the reality of Job 14:1, and John 16:33 become all too real.

Job 14:1

¹ Man *that is* born of a woman *is* of few days, and full of trouble.

John 16:33

³³ These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

This Psalm was written by a man who was walking through one of the deepest valleys of his life.

The title of this Psalm indicates that it was written by David.

We do not know exactly when it was written, but most Bible scholars agree that it was written by David toward the end of his exile from Jerusalem when Absalom rebelled against him.

Dysfunction is never a good thing, especially within the family, and certainly David's family was a dysfunctional family.

Absalom had done his best to take his father's throne and his father's life. As a result of Absalom's actions, David had been exiled from his home and his family.

David had been hunted by soldiers loyal to his own son. Absalom had done everything in his power to destroy his own father. The only reason David survived Absalom's revolt was the grace of God.

Most Bible scholars believe when this Psalm was written, the rebellion is over, Absalom is dead, and David is headed home.

He is going back with sorrow in his heart because the son he loved more than life itself is gone.

He is going back to reclaim his rightful place on the throne of Israel.

He is going home to help restore a nation torn apart by a brutal civil war.

David is going home, but he is going home with a heart filled with sorrow.

Out of that sorrowful, broken heart comes this sweet, Psalm.

Out of that broken heart of that shattered father pours a song of undiluted praise and worship to God.

In David's song we find help for our own hearts when we are called on to walk through the hard places of life.

I want us to understand this evening that while sorrows will be a part of life, a sweet song can come out of our pain to the glory of God.

Notice:

1. DAVID'S REQUEST (VS. 1-2)

Psalm 61:1-2

¹ **Hear my cry**, O God; attend unto my prayer. ² From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

A. Lord to Hear Him (vs. 1)

This request was nothing new for David. Often David asked for God to hear his prayer and to grant his request.

Psalm 4:1

¹ **Hear me when I call**, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

Psalm 13:3

³ **Consider and hear me**, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;

Psalm 17:6

⁶ I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: **incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech.**

Psalm 38:16

¹⁶ For I said, **Hear me**, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me.

Psalm 55:2

² **Attend unto me, and hear me**: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise;

Psalm 60:5

⁵ That thy beloved may be delivered; save with thy right hand, and **hear me**.

This is the cry of a brokenhearted man.

Absalom is dead.

He was fleeing from David's men when the mule on which he was riding passed under a low limb. Absalom's hair became entangled in the tree and the mule rode off leaving him hanging there kicking in the air.

David's general found Absalom, and ignoring the clear command of David, Joab killed the young rebel.

Now, Absalom is dead, and David's heart is breaking.

Absalom and David had always had a stormy relationship. They had been estranged earlier, but

David had forgiven Absalom's transgressions and their relationship had been restored.

That was what David hoped would happen this time. But now Absalom is dead! There will be no restoration. There is only the overwhelming sense of loss, of sorrow, and of defeat.

From that broken heart David reaches up to God. He pleads with God to "hear" his "cry."

David reaches up to the only hope he has. He lifts his voice to the Lord the only One Who can help Him.

There are times when life overwhelms us as well. When those times come, we may sometimes think the Lord does not care about us, and that we must beg Him for His attention.

I want you to remind us that the Lord has promised to hear you when you call on Him.

Jeremiah 33:3

³ Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

The very God of Heaven inclines His ear to hear you! He listens for your voice because He is your Father and you are His child!

We can pray with confidence knowing the Lord hears us when we cry to Him.

Not only did David request for the Lord to Hear Him but also for the:

B. Lord to Help Him (vs. 2)

Psalm 61:2

² From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

From David's perspective, he is as far away physically from God as he can get.

He feels lonely, separated and cut off from the Lord.

He stated that his heart was overwhelmed.

The word overwhelmed means faint, feeble, weak.

So, he cries out to God for the help to make it through the problems he is facing.

All of us at times have either been at or will be at this place where you feel cut-off from God, far away from him, a place of sorrow of suffering. A time of problems, difficulties and trials.

When those times comes, the right place to go is to the Lord. He is the only One Who can help us. He is the only One Who can deliver us from what threatens to destroy us!

Not only did David request for the Lord to Hear Him and to Help Him but also for the:

C. Lord to Harbor Him (vs. 2)

Psalm 61:2

*² From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: **lead me to the rock that is higher than I.***

There is a lot happening in this statement. The image of a rock suggests stability is a time of turmoil.

So, he cries out to God to lift him from the threatening waves of sorrow and to whisk him away to a place of safety, where the storms cannot reach him.

David is asking the Lord to place him upon a rock that he cannot reach by himself.

He needs the Lord to do something for him that he cannot do for himself. He needs the Lord to place him where no one but God can reach him.

If the Lord places him upon such a rock, he knows he will be safe.

We should be thankful for the place of safety and the place refuge, a place that we can flee to in times of trouble, sorrow and suffering.

A place where the storms cannot harm us and the winds cannot blow us away.

Illustration:

No matter how high the skyscrapers stand, they always appear small from an airplane. When the Lord lifts us above our situations the things which appeared so terribly large before, are suddenly transformed into little problems that are easily overcome.

Notice also that David says he longs for “the rock that is higher than I.”

That phrase indicates David’s awareness that many of his troubles are his own fault.

If he had never sinned with Bathsheba, the events with Absalom would never have occurred. David sinned.

David brought the wrath of God into his house. David’s son is dead because David was weak!

Now, on the backside of his failure, when the full fallout of his actions have been realized, David acknowledges the truth that he cannot help himself, that he cannot make things right.

He confesses his need of One Who is superior or higher to himself.

That is the kind of refuge we need!

We cannot solve our problems.

We cannot lift our burdens.

We cannot even help ourselves because we lack the power, and most of the time, we don't even know what we really need!

But God knows what we need, has the power to lift our burdens.

We see David's Request but note secondly:

2. DAVID'S REALIZATION (VS. 3)

Psalm 61:3

³ For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.

Though David finds himself in a time of hurt he realizes there is hope.

As the sorrow that is influenced by faith deals with the heartache and heartbreak it faces, the sorrow that is influenced by faith stops to consider that its present needs rest on God's past performance.

What He has done for the saints in the past reminds us that He can do it now, regardless of the present circumstances.

Notice there was:

A. A Realization of God's Provisions

Psalm 61:3

*³ For thou hast been **a shelter** for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.*

This shelter was a place of refuge, a place of safety, a place of protection from danger.

David looks back over his life and he remembers the times when sorrows and troubles stalked him.

He remembers God giving him victory as a boy over a lion and a bear.

He remembers God giving him the victory over a giant.

He remembers God sheltering from the murderous rage of King Saul.

He remembers how God delivered him from the wrath of his own son.

David remembers that in every trial he ever faced, God provided him a place of safety and protection.

Based on God's past performance, David is certain that God will not fail him now!

Not only did David have a Realization of God's Provisions but also:

B. A Realization of God's Protections

Psalm 61:3

³ *For thou hast been a shelter for me, and **a strong tower from the enemy.***

The word tower carries the idea of "a high place above the fight and the fray." It can also refer to "a raised bed."

David's point is that through all the attacks, battles and sorrows of his life, God was with him and God provided him with a place of protection.

God provided him with a place to which he could flee.

God gave him a place that was beyond the reach of the enemies he faced in life a place of peace in the day of battles.

Remember, sorrow that is influenced by faith looks back. It realizes that the way God has worked in the past is an indication of how He will work today.

Faith informed sorrow knows that God never changes.

Malachi 3:6

⁶ For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Hebrews 13:8

⁸ Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

We have considered David's Request and briefly David's Realization but note lastly:

3. DAVID'S RESOLVE (VS. 4)

Psalm 61:4

⁴ I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

Because faith informed sorrow has poured out its request to God, and because it realizes that God is able to deal with the problems of life, faith informed sorrow resolves to live in light of what it knows to be true.

Notice David:

A. Resolves to Live In Commitment

David tells God that he will “abide in thy tabernacle forever.”

David was stating that he was going to abide in the presence of God.

The picture here is of a man who is hurting. Yet, in the midst of his pain he knows that God is working on his behalf.

He does not have all the information about what God is going to do, but he is determined to honor the Lord with his love, his worship and with his life.

This should be our resolve as well. There will be times when your heart is breaking, but if you belong to Him, He is working in your life to accomplish His will.

He is ever working for your good and His glory.

Romans 8:28

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Our duty is to trust Him regardless of the circumstances determine in our hearts that we will commit all we have and all we are to Him.

We must resolve to praise Him in spite of how we feel, what we think our how things look!

Not only did David resolve to “Live in Commitment” but also David:

B. Resolves to Live In Confidence (vs. 4)

Psalm 61:4

*⁴ I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: **I will trust in the covert of thy wings.** Selah.*

The word “covert” speaks of “a covering, a hiding place, a place of safety.”

It is the picture of a chick hiding under the sheltering wing of its mother.

When danger appears the mother hen stands and allows her chicks to run under her.

She settles down on top of them and protects them from anything that would threaten them.

If they are to be reached, the danger must go through the mother.

David expresses his confidence in the Lord. He sets his hope in wings far greater than those of a mother hen.

David resolves to cast himself completely upon the grace of God, trusting the Lord to sustain him, help him and keep him.

He resolves that regardless of what comes his way, he will run to God and he will trust the Lord to shelter him and protect him from the sorrows and pains of life.

That should be our resolve as well. We cannot protect ourselves.

We cannot stave off even the smallest of troubles and trials.

Like a chick facing a hawk, we are helpless before our sorrows. But, there is a God in Heaven Who loves us!

As part of His relationship with us, he has committed Himself to our continual care.

So, instead of seeking to face the trials of life in your own power, resolve to run to the Lord and look to Him to shelter you from all that comes your way!

Close:

David closes this Psalm by expressing his confidence that the Lord will bless him in the future. He can see a time when the sorrows of this day will roll away and when he will walk in the blessings of the Lord.

Regardless of what you are facing today, or what may come into your life in all of your tomorrows, learn to rest in the Lord and trust Him to do what is right! Inform your sorrow with faith in the Word of God and in the God of Heaven.

Illustration:

The eagle has an extra eyelid. When he closes this lid, which filters out light, he can still see, but he is not blinded by the sun. When an eagle is attacked by a flock of other birds, the eagle will close that extra lid and fly directly toward the sun. His enemies cannot

continue their pursuit when the eagle turns his face toward the sun.

What a lesson for us.

When the enemies of this life attack you, turn your face toward the Son and fly toward Him. Your enemies cannot follow you there!