

Depending on God

By Jeff Noblit

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Anchored in Truth Ministries

1915 Avalon Ave.
Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

Website: www.anchoredintruth.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth

Psalm 141. Let's go there this evening. David could have very well been singing that very song as he wrote this Psalm which, of course, is a song the Jews would sing. Psalm 141. David says,

1 A Psalm of David. O LORD, I call upon Thee; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call Thee! 2 May my prayer be counted as incense before Thee; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering. 3 Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips. 4 Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, To practice deeds of wickedness With men who do iniquity; And do not let me eat of their delicacies. 5 Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me; It is oil upon the head; Do not let my head refuse it, For still my prayer is against their wicked deeds. 6 Their judges are thrown down by the sides of the rock, And they hear my words, for they are pleasant. 7 As when one plows and breaks open the earth, Our bones have been scattered at the mouth of Sheol. 8 For my eyes are toward Thee, O GOD, the Lord; In Thee I take refuge; do not leave me defenseless. 9 Keep me from the jaws of the trap which they have set for me, And from the snares of those who do iniquity. 10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets, While I pass by safely.

David is in a terrible, terrible dilemma. Maybe in his own faith he doesn't feel the dilemma but for many human understanding he is in a terrible dilemma. He is fighting vicious enemies from within his own heart and outside of himself and there are great complexities in both of those. It's one thing for Satan to show up in a red suit with horns on his head and a forked tail, you know what's going on, you know he's your enemy but David is dealing with some real sophisticated schemers and deceivers here and he is wrestling with some stuff. A lot of power plays going on, manipulations going on, as he's not yet king but he's on his way to the throne and he is purposing in being pleasing to God to honor Saul who now is the king though Saul is wicked and unrighteous. But David understood the truth: you honor God's office, you don't look at the performance of a man, in other words, decide if you're going to honor the office he has put that man into.

So David is in this perplexity. You hear in this Psalm, he cries long and hard but he comes to God with absolute dependence. In other words he's saying, "God, as I look at

me and as I look outside of me, all I see is a mess. I totally throw myself on you. I throw myself on you because I know I can't trust me, I know I can't fix me and I throw myself on you because there are enemies around me that want to get me so, God, I am in full dependence upon you." He's confident that God and God alone is his answer and will be his answer even though he shows such humility that he knows he doesn't deserve in any way based on his merit or good works to be heard, he's just confident in grace God will hear him.

Of course, the context is that Saul is king and Saul is a miserable king. The nation is going to ruin. Outlaws roam the countryside. They are going into deeper debt. There is discontentment, even distress in the country. But as all of this is unfolding, David continues to grow in popularity. You may remember the scene when David comes back in from fighting the battles, they would say, "Well, Saul has killed his thousands, but David has killed his tens of thousands." In other words, he was a much more successful military leader in fighting for and defending Israel than Saul was and, of course, Saul becomes jealous and Saul begins to purpose to kill David and has David literally run out of the country and it's likely that this Psalm was written while David is hiding in a cave as Saul is trying to kill him. So here you have righteous David, imperfect man by far, we're going to see that. He confesses his struggles with sin and shortcomings but he knows God's anointed him to be king one day but he knows he can't overthrow Saul. That's not his place. God will have to remove Saul. So here he is trying to honor Saul, be loyal to Saul but Saul is trying to kill him and he's hiding in a cave and it very well could be that that's the setting of where he writes this very Psalm.

Now, I think what's happening, we can't prove it from the text but I do think it's a healthy suggestion to surmise, if you will, that David is dealing, one of the perplexities he's dealing with is wicked men who claim to be his allies. Wicked connivers who claim to want to have an alliance with David but really what they're up to is power and control. They see David as a pawn they can use. David has popularity. David has esteem in the eyes of the people. He is growing as a mighty valiant ruler. They thought, "We can use David to destroy Saul and then after we use David to destroy Saul, we can make short work of David and then we can put our own guy on the throne." So he's dealing with not knowing who he can trust but knowing a lot of these guys are up to no good, kind of like Sanballat and Tobiah when they were saying, "Nehemiah, come off the wall. We need to talk to you. We need to discuss some stuff." Just guys who acted like, "We're on your side," but they weren't on his side at all, they were just trying to divert and dilute and pull the work of God back.

So David is dealing with some complex, difficult things. These men are out here trying to use David. They are trying to amuse him. They are trying to play on his fears. They are trying to condemn him for his failures, his unworthiness. It's all coming at him and David is wrestling with, "I know I'm not worthy and I know I fail him," he makes that very clear, "I know what these men, many of them are up to and I'm not sure exactly which ones are really my allies and which ones are really trying to destroy me ultimately," and so he just throws himself on God. There is even a phrase in here where it appears that

they are even using lurid sexual temptations to lure David away from faithfulness to God and to become pawns in their alliance to assassinate Saul.

Well, notice what David does in this perplexed and difficult place he finds himself in. Let me say something to you just as a context for you: the truths here perfectly parallel any mom, and a dad, any church member, any elder, any pastor, any church leader, who is trying to reform God's people and God's work back to biblical health. That's what David is, he's a reformer. He's God's choice to get Israel back on track and any time you're part of something, trying to get something back on track, you're going to experience lots and lots of attacks, undermining, twistings of what you say, schemings, people working with you but working against you. Expect it. If right now you're in a place where God is doing something in your heart and maybe you're trying to get your family back on track spiritually, whatever it is, you can expect difficulties and trials and even attacks in one form or another. Sometimes it's in your own family. You didn't see it coming. Sometimes it's from someone that had been a dear friend for many years and as you go forward for God, they are hurt by it. They lose maybe a position of control or influence in your life and they attack and that's the kind of stuff David is going through so don't think this is just a history lesson, this is an applicable instruction for all those who are striving to live godly in Christ Jesus.

But notice how in the midst of this, notice what David does first, verses 1 and 2, I'll use as sort of an introduction. He said, "O LORD, I call upon Thee; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call Thee!" First of all, that's rather bold. That's really bold. He just comes right out of the chute, "God, here I am, answer me." There are 2 sides to this coin: there can be some people who would go to God with that kind of confidence and boldness and it's just purely out of fleshly carnality. They are just full of themselves. They have no fear of God. They are just coarse and casual with God but that's not where David is. David is basing his boldness before God on this: "God, you trained me, you disciplined me, you came to me and your sovereign choice worked in my heart in the wilderness, showed me your blessing, showed me your hand was upon me. Not that I deserve it, it was your sovereign, unmerited choice and you are the one who came through the prophet to my household. Jesse my father was there and I was anointed to be king so, God, you started this, now help me." That's where David is.

Now, child of God, that's exactly where you are. Before the foundation of the world he chose you. It was unmerited favor. You are God's elect. His Son died for you. His Spirit came to you. A Gospel preacher preached to you. You were wooed and convicted by the word of God and the power of the Spirit using that word to convince and convict you and God drew you to himself and every point of that, God requires you to remember that God started that, God initiated that and God accomplished that so when you face trouble, what does the New Testament say? You can come boldly, amen, to the throne of grace. That's exactly...David gets grace. He gets the unmerited favor of God so David said, "I didn't start this thing. I didn't anoint myself king. God knows my weaknesses and shortcomings but God did it and so I have confidence to go to my God in dependence in this deep and difficult trial."

Verse 2, it builds on this. He says, verse 2, "May my prayer be counted as incense before Thee; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering." Now, notice the balance here. He's not going to the temple and going through the rituals and the motions prescribed by the priests when they would render up prayers. They would light incense as a soothing aroma to God that our prayers are coming up like incense and it was proper for the priest to do that but David had progressed spiritually beyond where the priest were. He had the inward reality of one that God had righteously transformed in his heart so he knows he doesn't have to jump through the hoops of the outward ritual. So he says, "I'm just going to come to you with hands raised. I don't have time to get to the temple and go through the motions but I know what you really want is a heart that is right with you, not just outward observance of burning incense in some temple sacrificial system."

So he has a bold faith. A bold faith and I want you to notice something: he has a bold faith even in the midst of knowing he's frail and weak and failing. Notice as we continue on, first of all, he is going to God in dependence on the Lord, I. For personal purity. He knows he fails in the area of maintaining purity. He wrestles with God, throwing himself in dependence, "Now God, you are going to have to keep me pure." I feel like I live there. I feel like if I'm going to have fidelity before God, God's got to save me from me and that's where David is and that's where he's living.

Notice how he words it there, let's see, we're beginning in verse 3 here. He begins with, wouldn't you know it, the tongue. Verse 3, "Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips." Now, just think about it: he's got all this swirling, he's got some people who are just obstinate, reviling condemners of him, just lambasting him. He's got others who are feigned allies of him. They are false; they are counterfeits; they are just trying use him. And in all of that turmoil, his emotions going everywhere, he knows, "I am very, very apt to fail in my words." And all of this temptation and all of this difficulty, "I am out to rail back when I shouldn't rail back and revile back. I'm apt to give into the fear of man and say, 'Well, I'd better go along with these people who want me to murder Saul right away because I need all the allies I can get and if I'll just go along with them, it will make my life easier.'" The fear of man and he could verbally assent to go along with their evil plans so he is just tempted and pulled in so many ways so he says, "God, I am no match for these temptations." Somebody asked me one time about pride, "How do you deal with pride?" And I said, "Well, I'm no match for my pride but God is," and that's where David is. He said, "I'm no match for my tongue and this kind of stress and pressure." Look, you can't control your tongue on a good day, much less when these kinds of swirling temptations are around you so David looks to God to help him with his tongue.

"Keep a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips." Just some thoughts on the tongue. As we know, the tongue is really impossible to hold until you get a brand-new heart. James says the person that can control his tongue has become perfect. Our Lord's here enemies, they always in parallel to David's situation, try to entangle him to get him to say something that would violate Jewish law and cause him to be condemned in the people's eyes. So David asks God in this setting to help him to not fight back wrong and not fall into the flattery of man pleasers or their evil desires and

wicked schemes. Someone said that when man fell into sin he fell totally into sin. When we fell into sin in the garden of Eden, Adam being the federal head of the human race, the spirit fell and the soul fell and the body fell and the feet fell and the eyes fell and the tongue fell but no part is more fallen than the tongue. Isn't it amazing, it can be the most vile and the most vulgar, it can be the most dangerous and the most damaging, the most searing, the most cutting, the most hurtful, the most poisonous, the most piercing member of all the body. Nothing can be more an instrument of wickedness than the tongue so David starts there, "God, I'm depending on you to help me here. Please help me." By the way, that's the real foundation stone to victory is saying, "God, I can't handle it. You're going to have to." That's the real foundation stone to walking in victory.

Really the tongue is that member of the body that has the most potential for God in God's glory but at the same time, it has the most proneness to evil of all sorts. I mean, with a few swipes between the teeth, the tongue can permanently wound an innocent person. The tongue can fully destroy a good man's reputation. The tongue can tragically maim a good name. It can swiftly destroy a man's entire work life. Just with the tongue. Just a little wicked word in the right setting.

No man is a match against the tongue. I don't know where I found this quote but I can know it's from an old guy because this is the way he talks. He talks in the old, if you will, Queen's English. He said, "We are in danger from the frequency of speech. In the multitude of words, there wanteth not sin. We must of necessity speak often but we often speak without necessity. Duty calls us to intermingle much with our fellow creatures but we are too little in the closet and too much in the crowd and when we are in company, we forget the admonition, 'Let every man be swift to hear and slow to speak.'" That convicts me, does it you? One of the Greek leaders was asked one day why he was holding his tongue and the person said, "Are you holding your tongue because you're a fool or are you just in want of words?" He responded, "No fool can hold his tongue." It's very true. Child of God, give the devil your tongue and he will ask for nothing more. If he can just use your mouthpiece a little bit, he's happy. He's got all he wants. He's got all he needs.

Well, David says, "God, help me to maintain personal purity. Help me with my tongue," and in this setting he was so prone to go off in a lot of different directions and sin and do harm with his tongue. Then he goes to a different thing, his heart. Verse 4, "Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, To practice deeds of wickedness With men who do iniquity; And do not let me eat of their delicacies." That word "delicacies" is something that could include lasciviousness or sensual pleasures. "Don't let me be lured in by those sensual pleasures and sin against you." So he's asking God now to help him in the purity of his heart. You see, the root of unrighteousness always begins in the heart. What comes out of the mouth always starts in the heart. Matthew 12:34 says we speak out of that which fills the heart. If ugly things come out of your mouth, you've got an ugly heart. If hurtful things come out of your mouth, you've got a hurting heart. Just might as well fess up and get right. It's what we are and, friend, only Dr. Jesus can give you a heart transplant. The the only thing you have to do to make your heart full of evil and wickedness is nothing. It's already full of evil and wickedness.

So David asks God to guard his outward behavior by guarding his innermost being, his heart. Give your heart to God that he may keep it because you can't keep it. You know, it seems like everyone wants your heart. "Give it to me," says the Pope of Rome, "Trust me with your heart." Religion says, "Give me your heart." Riches cry out for your heart. Lust says, "Turn your heart over to me." Pleasure says, "I must have your heart." But the choice is: is your heart going to be God's heart or the devil's heart? Another key quote I found, "Yet it is thy heart that is a vain heart, a barren heart, a sinful heart, until thou givest unto God and then it is the spouse of Christ, the temple of the Holy Ghost and the image of God so changed, so formed, so refined, that God now calls it a new heart."

How many of you have heard the sermon by Lester Roloff, "Dr. Law and Dr. Grace"? Do you remember that? I showed it up here on one Sunday night. Go home and Google or whatever you all do and find "Dr. Law and Dr. Grace." I'm telling you, it's worth listening to and Lester Roloff just paints the portrait of a man coming into the doctor. He comes to see Dr. Law and Dr. Law says, "I have diagnosed your case: you've got a bad heart." And the guy said, "Well, I need to do this," and Dr. Law said, "You don't understand, there is nothing you can do for your heart. It's just too ruinous, too vile, too ugly." He says, "Just nothing you can do with it." He said, "Well, can you...?" He said, "No, there's nothing we can do. You're going to die and be destroyed forever because you've got a corrupt heart." He said, "What am I going to do?" He said, "I can't do anything. I'm Dr. Law, all I do is diagnose the case." He said, "But I do have an associate. His office is right down the hall. I can take you to him, his name is Dr. Grace. And you don't need to give him your heart, what's he going to do with the filthy, vile thing? He wants to get rid of that. He wants to give you a new heart." He just develops that whole thing. Well, that's where we are: our hearts are so wicked.

Now, when we become Christians, there is a new man, the Bible says, and this is one of those spiritual truths that is hard to, I guess, arrange in our thinking. We just know that it's true. But while you have a new heart, the old flesh package is still there. You can use the terminology, some people say, "We don't say we have an old nature if we've got a new nature." Well, call it what you want but the old stuff is still there but there is the presence of a new heart and a new desire that wants to please and honor God. Well, David is saying, "My old heart is still prone to wickedness. It's still prone to temptation. O God, help me and guard me. I depend on you." Do you pray like that? I hope you do. I hope you walk with a humility of contrition and say, "O God, what a heart I have. Help me. Help me until you give me my glorified body and I've got an all new body and an all new heart. Help me with what I've got."

Well, then he says something about his feet. Not only, "God, I'm depending on you to keep me pure in my lips and my speech and pure in my heart," the last phrase of verse 4 there, he says, "With men who do iniquity." In other words, "I don't want to do what they are doing. I don't want to run with them and do like them." "Do not let me eat of their delicacies." Again, I think these wicked men he's talking about were those men who were feigned friends. They were counterfeits. They wanted to say they were his ally so they could get him with all of his power and popularity to overthrow and kill Saul and then they could do David in also.

So God actually answered this prayer, if you will, when David said, "Don't let me be lured in by the enticements of these evil men." You see, what a complex thing: Saul is unrighteously trying to kill David but David knew to please God he could not attack Saul because he was God's anointed king so wouldn't it be complex to you if somebody is trying to destroy you and men came up and said, "I'm going to fight with you," wouldn't it be tempting to join in with them? But he says, "I can't do that. Don't let me run with that crowd, God, that's not the righteous way to fix this problem." Child of God, do you understand that when difficulty and trial comes, you don't react in human flesh and in human logic, you act on the word of God. David knew he could not bring his hand against God's anointed king but these wicked men wanted him to do it. He knew they had schemes to do him in too and he's just troubled so he says, "God, don't let me do it."

Well, God answer that prayer because then Saul got after David and David runs and has to hide in a cave. He wasn't around sin to be tempted by it. You've got to be a little careful. We can't just all go and hide in caves and get away from sins because we take our hearts in there too but at least he's away from these evil men. As 1 Samuel...let's see, where is that verse? Well, I don't have the cross-reference here before me but David is running from Saul and he's having to hide in this cave and so he at least gets an answer to the prayer of not being exposed to these evil men.

Well, we don't want to learn the ways of evil men and our hearts are prone already to want to run with evil men. The sanctification process is just to go against the world, it's to go against Satan and it's to go against our own fallen natural hearts that we carry around and we have to do like David and say, "O God, help us here." Spurgeon said that, "Good men are horrified at the thought of sinning as others do for the fear of it drives them to their knees." Have you ever been compelled when you think about the sinfulness of your tongue, the sinfulness of your heart, the sinfulness of your feet, your actions, have you ever been compelled to go to your knees and say, "God, I'm deplorably weak, you've got to help me"? That's where David is. That's a good place to be. It begins in the heart, that's the foundation and the fountain of all of our lives but it streams out through our lips and through our lives. If the fountain of life is not kept pure, then the streams will be polluted also.

Now, as we look at verse 5 here, I think what's happening here in verse 4, he's saying, "Please God, don't let me succumb to these evil influences." You get into verse 5 and he's saying, "Please do surround me with true godly fellowship." I think we see a beautiful picture of what the church is supposed to be in verse 5. So he says in verse 5, "Let the righteous smite me in kindness." Don't let me be influenced by those men who do iniquity but I do want the influence of the righteous. "Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me; It is oil upon the head." The word "smite me" literally means "hammer." He says, "I will take a cutting rebuke from the righteous because they are helping me." Deceitful are the kisses of an enemy but the reproofs and the rebukes of a righteous man are like oil upon the head. He said, "I need the fellowship of the saints of God to help keep me in line and help save me, listen, from me." Wow, there is a lot of stuff going on here. Wickedness from without, deception and scheming and lying and

false alliances, his own heart, his own mind, his own lips. He's wrestling with the temptation. He's just throwing himself on God and saying, "God, I trust your means to give me godly folks around me who reprove me and rebuke me."

We do know that God answered this prayer probably in a number of ways but there was one day after David became King that he failed God and Nathan the prophet walked in and confronted David about his sin of having Uriah killed and committing adultery with Bathsheba and Nathan reproved him. Nathan smited him, hammered him with rebuke and said, "Thou art the man." David was brought to tears and brought to repentance. We see this as Paul takes Peter aside, the Scriptures tell us in the New Testament, and Paul says, Peter had even gone to the point where he would not fellowship with Gentile believers because the Jewish believers thought that the Gentile believers weren't quite yet up to where the Jewish believers were. They were doing seeker friendly churches. We've got to have churches for Gentile believers, we've got to have a second one for Jewish believers and Paul said absolutely not. That's degrading to our God and the Gospel. When God saves people, all people, no matter how contrary or in conflict or the enmity they had before conversion, they are one in Christ after conversion and my church is to be a picture of that. So Paul pulls Peter aside because Peter fell into that failure and Paul says, "I rebuked him to his face." That's that smiting him with correction for his own good and for God's glory. Now, the church at Rome says Peter was the first Pope, well, if Peter was the first Pope, he's been rebuked and corrected so he's not speaking ex cathedra and he's not sinlessly perfect by any means.

What I'd like to say is: what a picture of church fellowship. This is the natural practice of church life. Directly or indirectly, we live a life of correction, reproofs and rebukes one to another because we're all like David. We all wrestle with our tongues. We all wrestle with our heart. We all wrestle with our feet. And during those times of intense warfare, there's just so much going on that we've got to have the fellowship of God's people to help us stay strong.

Now, he uses the word "in kindness" there, "Let them smite me in kindness." So the Christian rebuke should be like the dew falling, not like a rushing hailstorm and that's why he says it's just like the pouring of oil on the head. Our first correction should be gentle and kind and sweet. Now friend, the word "rebuke" includes a firm harshness but that should be only when the other efforts have failed and someone is in hardened sin and will not respond in any other way.

Well, so he's crying out to God in all these ways. "God, do all these things I need to keep me pure. You're going to have to help me with my tongue, help me with my heart, help me with my feet. Don't let me follow the deceptive schemes of those who do iniquity and give me godly people to surround me and to help me." Now secondly, not only is he dependent upon God to preserve him in purity but also to persevere to the end. He talks about his enemies now, what's going to ultimately happen and I think what David is saying is, "I know what their end is going to be. Help me to be faithful until you get through with destroying my enemies." And child of God, do you know that's a righteous prayer for the New Testament saint? The New Testament records that God has his hand

to favor and love for his church but we may find ourselves persecuted and alienated and run over but we can cry out to God for justice to be served against our enemies, not because we have a vindictive spirit but because we know it pleases our God to preserve his own and to judge his enemies and you can't be an enemy of a Christian and of God's church without being an enemy of God. We see that at least on 2 occasions in the New Testament.

So David says, "Their judges are thrown down," this is verse 6, "by the sides of the rock." Then he says, "And they hear my words, for they are pleasant." I think what's happening here is after the wicked are judged and humbled, they humbly agree with the truth that David was trying to say and support and preach and share to start with. Brothers and sisters, listen: there is coming a day when everyone who hates everything we stand for will humbly admit what we're standing for is right. There is coming a day, not because we are right but because the God we serve is right. David is not full of arrogance, he just knows he's right with God on this. He's saying, "There's coming a day when they will think all the things they hate me for, the righteousness I preach, there's coming a day when they will agree. They will say those are pleasant words when they hated me for those words at one time." So in the end, they are going to be forced to agree with our words after God brings them to humility. How many times, by the way, child of God, though we're not the objects of God's judgment, does God not humble us and all of a sudden we're ready to say, "Lord, you're right, I'm wrong. My attitude was wrong. My viewpoint was wrong. My hardness of heart was wrong. God, you're right." Child of God, God knows how to humble you. God knows how to humble you. He certainly knows how to humble me.

Well, let's go on to verse 7, "As when one plows and breaks open the earth, Our bones have been scattered at the mouth of Sheol." I think this is his enemy speaking. He's saying, they say at the end of verse 6, "David's words are pleasant. We used to hate him for them but we've been humbled. They are pleasant," and now they are saying, "And look what's happened to us because we wouldn't earlier repent. We would not earlier receive God's truth. We would not earlier honor God. Now our bones have been scattered at the mouth of Sheol." So this is the voice of the broken wicked. Where are the Alexander the Great's, the Nero's, the Napoleon's, the Hitler's, the Mussolini's, the Saddam Hussein's, the Stalin's of history? Where are they now? Their bones are scattered at the gates of Sheol. They have come to nothing and that's just exactly what's going to happen to Saul eventually as Saul is full of himself. You know, after God anointed, God gave Israel Saul because Israel didn't want God as their only king, they wanted a human king. God said, "Okay, you want flesh to rule you, I'll give you a good dose of it. Saul." And the first battle Saul won, he comes back and the Scripture specifically says he made a monument unto himself. God help pastors, God help this pastor, God help any church member who uses their service to Christ as a monument to themselves. It needs to be a monument to Christ.

But that's just who Saul was. He was an unregenerate, pagan, carnal man. But he came to ultimate and great ruin in the end, his bones indeed were scattered. I want to say something to you that I think ought to be said and that is: after 35 years and God bless

you for standing with us as we have tried to reform a church to be biblically true. We've still got a long way to go, still learning, still repenting. But there have been a great number of those who tried to attack, oppose, undermine, scheme against. I'm telling you, their lives are not working out well today. I'm telling you, it doesn't look good for them down the road. Let me say something to you: now, there are good folks who get mixed up and deceived and get on the wrong track. We all know that, amen? But there are folks who willfully, habitually, pre-meditatively try to destroy God, God's men and God's work. I'm telling you something: you can't attack the bride of Jesus Christ and God not bring retribution to you. I'm telling you: sin a million and one other ways before you attack knowingly the bride of Jesus Christ. I'm telling you: bad things are coming. But the enemy here cries out after the humbling, "Look, our bones are scattered at the mouth of Sheol." A bad, bad result comes for that kind of a person. Now notice, there's a real difference between sin and we're all sinners, I'm talking about a clear, premeditated, obstinate attacker of God's truth and God's work.

Well, he is totally dependent upon God for the purity he needs in his life. He has totally thrown himself in dependence upon God to persevere until God finally renders his enemies of no effect and destroys them. Thirdly, III. He is totally dependent upon God for protection. Verse 8, "For my eyes are toward Thee, O GOD, the Lord; In Thee I take refuge; do not leave me defenseless." Who knows how many...David will probably have days when he feels pretty good and he's kind of encouraged, then circumstances will happen and he'll be crushed to despair on the next day. Up and down. Up and down. Up and down. I'm just sure that that was the experience he was going through so in some of those deep down times, he says, "O God, I need you."

Notice how he said it, "For my eyes are toward Thee." You know, you tend to go where your eyes are. My wife tells me and she's correct, she says, "Have you noticed when you look off the road, you turn that way." I have this weird gyro system in my brain and I have a little busy thing that's just part of my DNA and I can be looking at something, I see a white tailed deer over there and I'll be 2 feet off the road before I know it, you know. So I have to be really careful. Well, David says, "My eyes are turned toward God," and I think there's something there. He says, "I am purposing to cast my gaze toward you because I want to move toward you. I'm looking to you for my protection. I need your protection." David is sitting at the Lord's doorstep.

Verse 9, "Keep me from the jaws of the trap which they have set for me, And from the snares of those who do iniquity." Now, I'm sure David is sitting there in the cave or wherever he may be and he's saying, "O God, I'm confused at times. It would be so tempting to form an alliance with these people who want to help me defeat Saul because Saul is trying to kill me. But God, I know that's wrong and I can't do that. Help me. That's a trap. Help me." Listen, child of God, especially pastors who may get this sermon later on, I know a number of them listen to us: you'd better bet when you try to stand on the word of God in your churches, there are going to be those who come along beside you who have evil motives ultimately and you had better pray for discernment to know who is the true and who is not the true. Who is really in it for the glory of God and they love your God and your doctrine or they just think you're strong and they want to attach to you

so that they can get some advantage out of your strength for themselves. David was struggling with that temptation. I'm sure some days he felt like he was about to give into it so he says, "God, keep me. That's a trap they have set for me."

Then verse 10, "Let the wicked fall into their own nets, While I pass by safely." So the point is: God will catch them in their own traps. Boy, I've seen that happen. You know, it's just the grace of God that I'm not one of those who gets caught in his own trap. Aren't you glad God catches you and keeps you? Because the wicked, I'm just telling you, if you know those people who use religion for selfish gain, I'm telling you, you don't need to be around that kind of person. That's what these people were doing, trying to use David for their own gain because he was God's anointed King and David said, "They set traps really for me but, God, I'm asking you to catch them in their own traps."

I think in summary, I think it's good to note that though David is crying out for protection and defense against human enemies, David, listen now, David is more concerned with the enemy he sees in his own heart than what he sees out there. Have you come to realize that? All this stuff, "The devil made me do it." Look, there is enough evil in your heart to sin all day long every day the rest of your life, the devil doesn't have to do anything. That's where David is. "God, my tongue, my heart, my feet. Help me. Save me from me."

David feared more his own fleshly temptations than the open attacks of the enemy. Phillips says in his commentary, "Men and nations lay down with their own hands the paving stones along which their retribution travels. It is one of God's ways of showing us that he's still on the throne and that his moral government of human affairs is indeed a power to be reckoned with on earth." Let me say that first part again, "Men and nations lay down with their own hands the paving stones along which God's retribution travels." That's what he's saying: they have laid these nets but let your retribution be that you catch them in their own nets.

Well, David said, "God, I've got to depend on you for it all. I can't stop sinning. I can't fix me. I can't discern all that my enemies are doing but I depend on you." Friend, let me tell you something: you can depend on him too. You just need to be humble and cry out in truth of what you are and you will find God faithful. I have to pray it all the time, "God, save me from me." That's the biggest struggle I have.

Now, all of God's people said, amen.