

PSALM 57

FROM THE DEPTHS OF A CAVE

The Psalmist penned this song “when he fled from Saul in the cave” (1 Sam. 24). This is a song from the depths of the earth; and like Jonah’s prayer from the bottom of the sea, it has a taste of the place. The poet is in the shadow of the cave at first, but he comes to the cavern’s mouth at last and sings in the sweet fresh air – with his eye on the heavens, joyously watching the clouds floating overhead.

Here in the first six verses, we find David placing all his dependence upon the Lord. Even the most eminent believers often need to repeat the prayer of the publican in the Savior’s parable: “God be merciful to me a sinner!” But if our souls trust in the Lord, this may assure us – even in our utmost dangers – that our calamities will at length be overpast; and in the meantime, by faith and prayer, we must make Him our refuge. Although God is the Most High, yet He condescends so low as to ensure that all things are made to work for good for His children. This is a good reason why we should pray earnestly! We may look whichever way we want on this earth, and yet refuges fail and no help appears; but we may look for it from heaven, and we shall not look for it in vain from there! If we have fled unto Jesus Christ in order to escape from the wrath to come, then we may rest assured that He Who performed all things that were needful to purchase the salvation of His people will also do for us all things that are needful for our enjoyment of it.

It made David droop to think there were persons who bore him so much ill-will. But the mischief which they intended to carry out against him ended up returning upon themselves. We may notice that even when the Psalmist was in the greatest distress and disgrace, he did not pray, “Lord, exalt me”; but rather, “Lord, exalt thine own name.” Our best encouragement in prayer is taken from

Overview of the Psalm, adapted from Charles Spurgeon:

In the title of this composition, we meet with a new word for the first time: Al-taschith – that is, “Destroy not.” This petition is a prayer that is as full as it is brief, and it is very worthy to be the motto for a sacred song. David had said, “Destroy not,” in reference to Saul, when he had him in his power; and now he takes pleasure in employing the same words in supplication to God. From the spirit of the Lord’s Prayer, we may infer that the Lord will spare us as we spare our foes. There are four of these “Destroy not” Psalms – namely, this one, the 58th, the 59th, and the 75th.

Here we again find the phrase, “Michtam of David.” For quality, this Psalm is another of the “golden secrets”; and it well deserves the name. We may read the words and yet not know the secret joy of David, which he has locked up in this golden casket.

The contents of this Psalm are prayer (verses 1-6) and praise (verses 7-11). The hunted one takes a long breath of prayer; and when he is fully inspired, he breathes out his soul in jubilant song.



the glory of God, which we ought to keep at the forefront in all our petitions to Him. Thanks be to His name, for He does not forsake His people! Instead, He makes their enemies fall into the pit which they themselves have made, so that they are utterly subverted and taken in their own craftiness!

By lively faith, David's prayers and complaints were speedily turned into praises (verses 7-11). His heart was fixed; it was prepared for every event, because it was established upon Jehovah. When the grace of God brings us into this calm and

composed frame of mind, we have great reason to be thankful! Nothing is done for any good purpose in religion unless it is done with the heart, and so the heart must be fixed for the duty – that is, it must be put in the proper frame for it, and prepared for it by close attention. Our tongue is our glory, and it is never more so than when it is engaged in praising our God; dull and sleepy devotions will never be acceptable to Him. Let us awake early in the morning, in order to begin the day with our God of mercy! When the Lord comes toward us with His favors, let us go forth to meet Him with our praises! David desired to bring others to join him in praising God; and in his Psalms, he is continually praising God among the people, and singing to Him among the nations (verse 9). Let us pray that our hearts may also be fixed to praise the Lord's boundless mercy and unfailing faithfulness, so that we may glorify Him with our bodies, souls, and spirits – which are His. Let us also earnestly pray that the blessings of the Gospel may be sent throughout every land!

In conclusion, let us not fail to observe how this Psalm began in sorrow but closes in joy! Indeed, whatever is founded in faith and prayer must end in praise. This holds good for all the sons and daughters of the Lord Jesus. When our souls take hold on Jehovah's strength, we shall come off more than conquerors, through His grace helping us. Just as Christ arose from the dead, and awakened in His glory; so also, every morning – especially on the Lord's Day morning, which celebrates Jesus' triumph over the grave – all His redeemed ones ought to call upon themselves to awake and bless the Lord of their salvation right early! And just as Jesus declared His determination to praise Jehovah's name among His brethren (see Psalm 22:22-26); so also, His redeemed ones should shout aloud, in all the churches, concerning His wonderful work of salvation!

O Lord, we repent of times when our devotions and our worship of You have been dull and sleepy, for that is not acceptable to You. We pray for grace and strength to shout aloud concerning Your wonderful works of salvation! Amen.