

August 30, 2026

Psalm 57

(To the choirmaster: 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. ² I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me. ³ 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! ⁴ 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. ⁵ Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth! ⁶ 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

⁷ My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast! I will sing and make melody! ⁸ Awake, my glory! Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn! ⁹ I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations. ¹⁰ For your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. ¹¹ Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!



A Psalm from the Cave
Psalm 57

BIG IDEA: When destructive people wound the soul, let the exalted glory of God steady our hearts and restore our praise.

Or to say it more simply, God's glory awakens wounded hearts!

OUTLINE

1. Seeking Refuge in God (vv. 1-3)
2. Bringing Destructive Opposition before God (vv. 4-6)
3. Fixing Our Hearts on God (vv. 7-11)

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These “Sermon Discussion Questions” are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. How do you feel about caving — being closed in, dark, with no clear way out? Take a minute to read the historical context.
2. What can we learn about God from David's plea in verses 1–3?
3. David's heart becomes steadfast and breaks into worship in verses 7–11 while he's still in the cave — before anything about his situation has actually changed. What's currently keeping you from worshiping God in the middle of your pain, rather than waiting until He fixes it first?
4. What's one thing you want to take with you from this Psalm?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

By the time David wrote this psalm, Saul's hostility toward him had been building for years. Saul had been chosen and anointed as Israel's first king and looked like the perfect man for the job — until he directly disobeyed the command given through the prophet Samuel and, when confronted, minimized it rather than repented. Samuel's verdict was blunt: "Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king" (1 Sam. 15:22–23). From that point on, Saul grew increasingly obsessed and paranoid about who would replace him. When the shepherd boy David killed Goliath and came home with the giant's own sword, and when the women of Israel sang, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (1 Sam. 18:7), jealousy poisoned Saul's heart. What followed was an all-out manhunt for David — at once Israel's future king and the most famous fugitive in Old Testament history.

Adapted from the ESV Study Bible and Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary: Exalting Jesus in Psalms 51–100 by Platt, David; Mason, Matt; Shaddix, Jim.

Praise to Jesus – All praise to our merciful God who is our refuge in the storms. His purposes for us are good and great, and He will send His steadfast love and faithfulness to save us! When our enemies seek to trample us, there is no cave too deep for God to reach us. O God, be exalted above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth — you steady our hearts and may all of our trials cause us to sing praises to the nations, for your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

Repent through Jesus –Father, we confess the moments when we let fear overcome us, which led us to doubt your purposes and plans. We confess when we have believed that real faith did not acknowledge the hurt caused by our wounds, and we listened to the voices of our enemies rather than listening to you. Father, thank you for the forgiveness that is ours in Jesus.

Consecration for Jesus –Church, when destructive people or circumstances wound our soul, let the exalted glory of God steady our hearts and restore our praise. For the steadfast love of the Lord is great to the heavens, and His faithfulness reaches to the clouds.

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

These questions are written to aid parents in leading family devotions with their children.

1. What is an enemy? Who are our enemies? (This psalm speaks of David and God's people facing enemies and troubles. You will need to determine the various maturity levels of your children to guide how you walk through this discussion. For your more mature children, you will want to lead the discussion towards talking about the spiritual (unseen) enemies that we face. For younger and/or less mature children, you can briefly talk about this by referring to board games or sports in which you have an opponent that is working against you. You could wait to ask the question about who our enemies are later in this study, perhaps after question 3.)

2. What did David do when he faced opposition and danger? (He fled to a cave and prayed to the LORD. He knew that hiding in a cave would not save him, but God would.)

3. What scares you? Why? What do you do when you are scared?

4. What does it mean to exalt God? (We read of David exalting God in verses 5 and 11. Exalting God means to honor Him and to let people know the greatness of our God. We can't exalt Him without knowing Him and knowing His attributes. Make sure to talk about the picture we get of God in this psalm and then the picture we get from the Bible.)

5. What does it mean for God to get glory? (When God gets the glory, He is recognized for His greatness. He gets the credit for our salvation, for His sovereignty, and for being perfectly holy and righteous.)

6. This psalm mixes prayer requests with praise for God. Take time to pray together by including your prayer requests and your praise for God.

Scriptures for further study:

Joshua 1:9

Isaiah 41:10

Matthew 11:28-30

Galatians 2:20

1 Corinthians 10:31

FOR STUDENTS

Scriptures for further study:

Joshua 1:9

Isaiah 41:10

Romans 8:31-32

Matthew 11:28-30

2 Corinthians 1:3-5

Galatians 2:20

1. David is hiding in a cave, hunted by the most powerful man in the country, and his first move is to cry out to God. Not to plan his escape. Not to process with a friend. To pray. When something or someone is actively working against you right now, what is your actual first move? What would it look like for prayer to be the first thing rather than the last resort?

2. David describes his enemies in vivid, brutal terms - lions, fire, nets, pits. He is not softening it. He is bringing the full weight of the situation to God. What makes it hard to be that honest and specific with God about what is actually hurting you? Do you tend to clean up your prayers before you bring them, or do you bring them raw?

3. Real faith does not mean minimizing the reality of your pain. Have you ever been taught - or assumed - that struggling or grieving or being hurt means your faith is weak? How does David's prayer in this psalm push back on that?

4. David's heart becomes steadfast and breaks into worship while he is still in the cave - before Saul is defeated, before anything changes. His circumstances are identical. What changed? Is there a situation in your life right now where you are waiting for God to fix it before you praise him? What would it look like to praise him in it instead of after it?

5. The refrain in verses 5 and 11 is identical: Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth. David says it twice - once at the lowest point and once at the highest. What does it mean for the glory of God to be your chief concern in a painful situation, not just in theory but in how you actually pray and respond? Is that honestly where you are right now?

6. God demonstrated his ultimate love and faithfulness by sending Jesus. David could only hope forward to a rescue he could not yet see. You are on the other side of the cross. How does knowing that God did not spare his own Son change the way you trust him with whatever cave you are currently sitting in?

FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

1. Though David is confident in the face of adversity, he is still very real and honest about the harsh realities of his situation. Having faith doesn't mean we pretend our situation isn't troubling.

Question: In what ways may we be tempted to think that true faith means minimizing the reality of our pain, our grief, our worry, etc.?

2. David acknowledges the reality of his current predicament, but he doesn't focus his thoughts on the problems. Instead, he focuses his eyes on God who is unfailing in his love and faithfulness, and he focuses his eyes on the future in confidence of what God is going to do for him.

Question: In what ways can we become too fixated on our problems? How can this Psalm teach us, instead, to fix our gaze on God and on his coming promises?

3. The refrain, "Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth," appears twice (vv.5, 11). This expresses David's chief concern: the manifestation of God's glory.

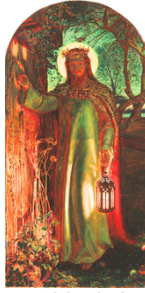
Question: Is the glory of God your chief focus in life as a whole? In your particular difficult situation, is it also your chief desire to see that God gets all the glory in and through your present circumstances?

4. The psalmist David is fully confident that God will show his unfailing love and faithfulness in one form or another. The Bible says that God did this ultimately by sending us his one and only Son, Jesus Christ, to truly rescue us and save us.

Question: Have you yet experienced this ultimate love of God in Jesus?

Question: In addition, what other ways has God over the years demonstrated his love and faithfulness to you?

The Blessed Life: A Study of the Psalms



"The Light of the World" (1851-1853) by William Holman Hunt

Psalms Introduction

The Book of Psalms is the sacred place where the living God meets His people in the most intimate and personal of ways. He invites them to know Him not merely as an idea, but as their refuge, portion, shepherd, and King. From the opening doorway of blessedness in Psalm 1 to the climactic Hallelujahs of Psalm 150, the Psalter reveals that the truly happy life is one rooted in the person and work of Almighty God, whose steadfast love holds His people through every season of the soul. As the Psalter moves from anguish to adoration, from darkness to dawn, it becomes a mirror of the Christian life itself. It teaches us to pray honestly, to hope stubbornly, and to sing faithfully, even when night seems long. In the deepest valleys, the Psalms give voice to the church's groan; on the highest heights, they train the church's doxology. And in every line, every cry, and every hallelujah, Christ Himself comes near, revealing the light of the world in the dark night of the soul and leading His people into the blessedness that only His grace can give.

– Pastor Bill

About the artwork and artist.

The Light of the World, 1851-1853, is an iconic allegorical painting by William Holman Hunt. The painting depicts Jesus Christ as a regal figure in flowing robes, wearing a crown of thorns, holding a glowing lantern, and preparing to knock on a weed-overgrown wooden door with no external handle. This illustrates Revelation 3:20 from the Bible: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him..." The artist William Holman Hunt is showing us that Jesus is the divine door to the living God who meets His people in the most intimate and personal ways. The closed, overgrown door → representing the human soul or "obstinately shut mind" that has long ignored spiritual calling. There is no handle on the outside → the door can only be opened from within, emphasizing free will and personal invitation to faith. The lantern → Christ as the light of the world (John 8:12), illuminating darkness and offering salvation. The work marked Hunt's deepening Christian faith (from earlier agnosticism) and became one of the most reproduced and devotional images of the Victorian era, inspiring oratorios, hymns, and widespread popular piety. It's often called a visual sermon on personal salvation.