

How To Live For One When Despair Threatens – Ps 57

We've been in 1 Samuel recently, looking at the life and example of David in his day, in order to live for One in ours

But today, instead of studying 1 Samuel and an account written *about* David . . .

I want to look at Ps 57 and an account written *by* David

The issue is **How to Live for One When Despair Threatens** ([Ps 57](#))

Know what I mean by despair?

Dictionary calls it a profound feeling of hopelessness

There's no hope and no joy; Only gloom, depression, and dejection

It's the helplessness that people feel when all alone, trapped, can't change their situation

It's the gloom you feel when you consider the financial crisis our country is facing – and the uncertainty of it all

It's the way I felt earlier this week, when I looked at our offering in light of the

LaJames build-out and our increased 4th quarter need

Despair threatened

You need look no further than the number of suicides or attempted suicides . . .

Or the number of people taking anti-depressants . . .

It's the way millions of people feel right now

- The threat of despair is a fact of life – not D itself, but the threat of it

It's true for us, and we find out from this Psalm, that it was true for David

He was threatened with D due to events/people outside of his control

Let me show you what I mean (read [preface to Ps 57](#))

Here's the deal – Saul grew to hate David intensely

So much so, that he tried to kill him

The Bible says that Saul was David's enemy *continually*

When he wasn't fighting the Philistines, he was looking for David

And it's during that time in David's life

Having been anointed king, drafted for service in the royal court, triumphant over

Goliath, and successful in whatever he did . . .

He found himself running for his life, hiding out in caves, and on the brink of despair

And it's in one of those caves that he wrote Ps 57 . . .

Preserved for us, so that like him, we'd live for One despite the threat of D, when things are bad in life (read [Ps 57](#))

If you're going to live for One when D threatens, you must . . .

Draw near to God (v1)

That's the implication of v1 – *in the shadow of your wings*

The image of young chicks who nestle up next to their mother when the winds blow

And it implies a close tenderness

You can almost feel David's desire for it – *Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful* . .

“God, I so need your tenderness, compassion, closeness”

“Be my refuge in this storm”

I don't know about you, but when D threatens to take over my heart and soul, all I want to do is be with God; just be with him

Just forget about everything else, and be alone with God

In a place where I don't have to have words

A place where I don't have to do anything or worry about anything

I can just get quiet, get close, and curl up in the security of his presence

That's taking refuge in God

That's hiding in the shadow of his wings

- But if that's where it stops, you cut yourself short, b/c that's only part of the solution

One of David's biggest problems, at least initially, was that he was all alone

He was on the run, and *nobody* was with him

And though you may find yourself in that situation from time to time – God never intends for you to stay there

God never intends for you to do life alone – at least not for any length of time

Rather, he intends for you to *get together*

To live life in community/fellowship with others

That's one of the reasons we read in [1 Sam 22:1-2](#) – . . .

That's quite the rag-tag bunch don't you think?

But it was exactly what David needed, and God knew it

He didn't need more privacy – he had more than he could ever want

He needed fellowship; community

He needed the love of others who could express the love of God

- That's one of the reasons it's so important for you to be in a Small Group

To belong together in mutual partnership with other believers

People who might be a rag-tag bunch like David's, but love you nonetheless

And faithfully support you when the storms of life come crashing onto your shore

You have an insert in your bulletin for that purpose, and I'd encourage you to take advantage of it

To get into a SG and stick with it for the ministry year

And having just started to visit some of the groups, Becky and I will attest to the love, joy, closeness, and passion that exists among the members

If you're going to live for One when D threatens – you need that

Draw near to God; And get together

Second, if you want to live for One when D threatens . . .

Cry out to him (v2, 4)

When you're in the middle of the ocean, caught in a terrible storm and taking on water . . .

Do you get on the phone and order carry out? No

Do you go to a chat room to see who's up late? No

In desperation, you get on the radio and cry out for help

“Mayday, mayday; we're sinking; somebody help us; Please!”

It's a natural response; Nobody has to tell you call out for help
But who you call on makes all the difference

For David, it was God – *I cry out to God Most High* (2) . . .
The most powerful being in the universe
The One *who fulfills his purpose for me* (2b)
How amazing is that?

He's not only *able* to help you, but he actually has a *purpose* for your life
And *fulfills* it! In you
Do you know of anyone better to whom you could cry for help when you're sinking in
the ocean of D?
Do you know of anyone else who both has a purpose for your life, *and* is able to fulfill
it, even when the storms of destruction roll in?
I don't think you do – so cry out to the One who can

- And you can keep it real when you do
God's not looking for all kinds of flowery language, he's looking for your heart (v4)
David lived in a fallen world, among wicked people – just like us
And when D threatened his soul, he wasn't bashful about saying so
He cried out and kept it real

If there's one thing we see throughout the Psalms, it's raw language
Language that's straight from the heart – like Ps 58:3, 4a, 6-8
That's crying out to God and keeping it real
And that's okay, as long as that's where it stops
As long as you leave those thoughts with him, and him alone

When D threatens – cry out to the One who *can/will* fulfill his purpose in your life

Choose to trust (v3, 6)

Look at v3 – *He will . . . he will . . . God will*
The verbiage indicates David's choice to trust God's future grace
To trust his future provision and protection
It was a choice

- And so too for you and I
When despair, depression, and gloom threatens to suffocate your soul . . .
When things are so bad that you find it hard to physically breathe . . .
You have a choice to make

You can chose to embrace your D and sink deeper and deeper in the miry clay of your
own thoughts (which probably aren't true) . . .
Or you can choose to trust *God's* thoughts

You can choose to trust your own thinking and the way that *seems* right . . .
Or you can chose to trust God's thinking, and the way that *is* right
You can choose to trust yourself (or Dear Abbey, or the bar room brain trust) . . .
Or you can choose to trust God
It's a choice; And it's *your* choice

- That's not to say that choosing to trust is equally easy for everyone – it's not
You may be more prone to depression than others
And for that reason, find the decision to be more difficult
But you can still choose to trust
You may have a steeper slope of D, or a more slippery slope than someone else . . .
But you can still choose to trust
You may have fewer years of God's faithfulness under your belt . . .
But you can still choose to trust
Choosing to trust God/Word is harder for some than it is others – but it's still a choice
that you can make

And David cites 4 things from God in v3, that we can trust, starting with his salvation

- When D threatens – *choose*, like David, to trust God's . . .

(1) Salvation

David said in v3, *he will send from heaven and save me*
I can't help but think of Christ when read that – sent fr God in heaven, to bring
salvation to our souls
Salvation that's yours if you chose to trust God and his word

(2) Protection (3b) – *he will put to shame him who tramples on me*

And v6 – *They set a net for my steps* . . . That's protection
When despair threatens, live for One by choosing to trust God's protection
David experienced it, and so will you – if you choose to trust

(3) Love (3c) – *God will send out his steadfast love*

His always constant, always steady, always there – love
There's no more insidious lie from the pit of hell, than to think that God doesn't love u
And when you're in the depths of D, you have a choice to make – trust God's love, or
trust the lie

(4) Faithfulness (3c) – *God will send out his steadfast love and faithfulness*

God will never fail you; Never
Oh, he may work in ways you don't understand
He may allow things in your life, you'd rather not endure
But he will never fail to fulfill his purpose in your life – his purpose to use you for his
glory and your joy . . . if you trust him

Choose to trust

Change your focus (v5, 11)

David comes to v5 here, after drawing near to God and crying out to him, and expressing
his trust in God's provision, and says . . .
Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!
Then again at the end of the Psalm in v11 . . .
Lofty, poetic language of praise and worship

The point is – there's nothing like a little perspective to dispel the darkness of D

But it requires a change of focus

David could have wallowed in the depths of that cave forever, and probably would have . .
Had he not changed his focus from himself and the issues surrounding him, to God and
the glory above him

- When D threatens, you must do everything you possibly can, to get your eyes off yourself, and onto God; off your mirror and onto his face
Like that old hymn says – Turn your eyes upon Jesus; Look full in his wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim; In the light of his glory and grace

If you're going to have any hope of living for One when D threatens, you must change your focus; the way you see things
Instead of obsessing on your gloom, focus on his glory
Instead of diminishing yourself, magnify him
Instead of groping in the darkness, run to the light

- And one of the best ways to do so, is to read the Psalms
There's nothing like God's word to change your focus
And there's nothing better than the Psalms to do it

Nothing better to give . . .
Words to your heart when you have none
Expression to your soul when it aches more than you thought possible
Relieve your pain when it's deep in your soul

I've found nothing better in the middle of the night, when I'm beside myself with worry
I've found nothing better in the middle of the day, when I'm plagued with doubt

Why do you think Todd Beamer asked the emergency operator to read Ps 23 when the terrorists hijacked his airplane?
Because it changed his focus and gave words to his heart, when despair threatened

Change your focus; And finally . . .

Return to worship (v7-10)

When D threatens and you're struggling to live to One – Draw near to God; Cry out to him; Choose to trust; Change your focus; and Return to worship

This is perhaps hardest thing to do – to get back to a place of worship when D has u down
To sing praise and make melody in your heart (7b)
Give thanks in church *among the peoples* (9a)

When D threatens, returning to worship is often difficult, but worship we must . . .
B/c God is worthy – exceedingly steadfast in his love and great in his faithfulness (10)

- The question is, how?
How do you return to worship when D threatens and you don't really *feel* like it?
You do as David did in v7 and . . .

1. Renew your commitment (7)
That's what David did in v7
David renewed his commitment to worship by *verbalizing* it
And so must we – say it when you don't feel it, to renew it when you don't do it

IOW *verbalize* your commitment to worship when you don't feel like worshipping . . .
In order to *renew* your commitment to worship, when you're not doing it

2. Refresh your passion (v8)
After verbalizing his commitment to God in v7, he basically turns to himself and says in poetic language – “wake up”
As in – “Get up and get going; Stop laying around and refresh your passion”

There's comes a point in every dark night of the soul, where you're either going to refresh your passion for the things of the Lord, and return to worship . . .
Or sink ever deeper into the depths of D

3. Revive your praise (v9)
This is the public part of returning to worship
You may have just gone through the worst year of your entire marriage . . .
Or the darkest days of your entire career . . .
Or the most miserable time of your entire life . . .
And the last thing you want to do is worship

If that's you, don't go there
The *best* thing u can do during the *worst* time of your life – is revive your praise
To come back to a *heart* of worship, and a *place* of worship

- And that's exactly what some of you need to start doing that right now (**summary slide**)
Despair is threatening the joy of your heart, and the time has come to return to worship
And we're going to do so in just a minute

But before we do so *corporately*, I want to give you an opp to do so *privately*
A time to get with God and pour out your heart
A time to put a stake of trust in the ground, or drive it further in
A time to change your focus, and turn your eyes upon Jesus

If God's speaking to you on this, I want to encourage you to set this time apart
Just bow your head, get with the Lord, and listen while the worship team sings
Eventually, we'll all stand and return to worship together

(Pray) Lord, hear our prayers; Especially those who are threatened by D
Be their refuge in this time of storm . . . (leave open; WT sings)