

UNDER HIS WINGS

Tuesday, April 24

Reading: Psalm 57

Psalm 57:1 Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in you I take refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.

The story is told of a man who was looking over the remains of his farm after a fire had swept across it. In one part of the yard he came upon the charred remains of a mother hen. As the farmer kicked the burned body out of his path, several little chicks came running out from under their mother. The mother hen had sensed the danger and protected her chicks under her wings. She gave her life to protect and save them.¹

“David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam” (1 Samuel 22:1). This brief statement describes David’s situation when writing this psalm. He had narrowly evaded King Saul’s murder attempts and barely escaped the Philistine city of Gath with his life. Now he is hiding in a cave in the territory of Judah about fifteen miles from his hometown of Bethlehem. He is alone and cries for “refuge in the shadow of your wings.”

God had told Moses how He had “bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself” (Exodus 19:4). It is repeated many times in the psalms (cf. 17:8; 36:7; 61:4; 68:13; 91:1 & 4). This comforting image was also used of David’s great grandmother Ruth.

“May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.” (Ruth 2:12)

David had tried hiding from Saul in Philistine country. Now he realized he needed to hide in God. The “shadow” indicates closeness. You cannot have a shadow without the presence of the one casting it. David’s cry is to be close to the Lord. The shadow of Your wing also speaks of God’s protection. He is a refuge in the time of storm, not to take His people out of danger, but to go with them through the danger (57:4-5).

Notice the repetition of words like mercy (57:1a), refuge (57:1b), and steadfast heart (57:7). David realizes that God’s grace and glory are the only things that truly matter. God’s love and faithfulness are boundless (57:10). That is why he repeats his praise: “Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let Your glory be over all the earth” (57:5, 11).

In the New Testament, Jesus picked up this image of being under God’s wing. As He looked at Jerusalem He longed to gather them “as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing” (Matthew 23:37). The Apostle Paul writes that our lives are “hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). His presence and protection goes with us because we are “under the shadow of His wings.”

Under His wings I am safely abiding / Though the night deepens and tempests are wild
Still I can trust Him, I know He will keep me / He has redeemed me, and I am His child²

¹ Original story from “The Little Red Hen” by Floyd McCague - part of the Illustrated Gospel Series, 1945.

² “Under His Wings” William Cushing & Ira Sankey

THRU THE BIBLE Reading: 1 Samuel 13-15; John 14