

INTIMACY WITH THE ALMIGHTY

Monday, April 30

Reading: Psalm 61

***Psalm 61:6** Increase the days of the king's life, his years for many generations. **7** May he be enthroned in God's presence forever; appoint your love and faithfulness to protect him.*

This psalm may have been written when David was on the run from the rebellion of his son Absalom (2 Samuel 15-18). Forced from his home in Jerusalem and separated from the Tabernacle, David felt like he had been banished to “the ends of the earth.” In Psalm 61, David cries out and clings to his relationship with the Lord.

As I read Psalm 61 I see a progression of intimacy in the way David refers to God. He begins by describing the Lord as his Rock (61:2). In his distress he needed a place of stability and security. He could not get to this place on his own. He pleads with God to lead him to this “rock that is higher than I.” A rock is a good picture of security but it is not an intimate one. It is difficult to get personal with a rock.

David moves from an image of a rock to that of a refuge or tower (61:3). In his great hymn, Martin Luther wrote “A Mighty Fortress is our God.” This is what David pictures here. God is a strong tower where he is safe. Both these images comfort us with a promise of safety and security, but do not say much about the close relationship believers can have with God.

The “tent” in which David longs to dwell is the Tabernacle in Jerusalem where he went to worship and sacrifice to the Lord (61:4). The wings pictured here probably refer to the wings of the cherubim on the mercy seat that covered the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. Often the Old Testament speaks of God “dwelling between the cherubim” (cf. Num. 7:89; 2 Sam. 6:2; Psa. 80:1; Isa. 37:16; et. al.). It was the place where God's visible glory rested and where He met with His people. Though David was far away from the visible sign of God's presence, he knew that the shelter of God's presence was still with him. He could rest beneath “the shelter of Your wings” anywhere.

The final image David records is being “enthroned in God's presence forever” (61:6-7). This is the most intimate picture of this psalm. Though his throne at the moment was occupied by his treacherous son, David knew that God's love and faithfulness would do more than restore him to his earthly kingdom. It allowed him to have joy in God's presence even from “the ends of the earth.” These verses echo the promise God gave to David establishing an eternal kingdom (2 Sam. 7). This promise was literally fulfilled in Messiah - the Lord Jesus Christ.

The increasing intimacy of these images reminds us that our relationship with God should be ever growing. It does not stop with God as our protector. It must continue to grow as we grow deeper in the fellowship of His presence. How is your intimacy with God? Is it stronger today than it was 6 months ago?

THRU THE BIBLE Reading: 1 Samuel 25-27; John 18