

Friday, November 18, 2016

**Fortress**

Psalms 59-60

*O my Strength, I watch for you; you, O God, are my fortress, my loving God.*

*O my Strength, I sing praise to you; you, O God, are my fortress, my loving God.*

Psalm 59:9-10a, 17

The setting of this psalm is found in 1 Samuel 19:1-17. Saul is sending men to kill David. In the Samuel passage, I believe I see the answer to this prayer! David's life is spared. In this midst of this prayer, I see that Psalm 59:9-10a and 50:17 are very similar, but I notice the subtle difference as being significant. In verse 9, David is watching for the LORD; in verse 17, he is praising the LORD for being his fortress. Not much has changed in the midst of these verses. David's life is still being threatened. He is still running from Saul. Saul is still pursuing. But David speaks what he knows to be true. God is his fortress. God is his loving God. God is David's Strength. In the midst of trouble, David watches for the LORD and praises Him for being there—almost in the same breath. I love that about David—and all the psalmists. They remind themselves in prayers and songs what they know to be true. Reading the Psalms reminds me of the big God I love and serve and keeps me focused on the fact that it is all about Him. It helps me to think that whatever I am going through, I can watch for the LORD to work and praise Him that he is, because He is my Strength and my fortress, and my loving God. I may not be able to see exactly how He is working, but I am confident beyond a shadow of a doubt that He is!

*O my Strength, remind me often that You are with me and You are my fortress and that in You I am secure. I praise You, my loving God. I watch for You and I praise You, knowing You are there. I thank You for the many times in my life You have answered my cries for help. Amen.*

Saturday, November 19, 2016

**Dwell**

Psalms 61-62

*From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe. I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings.*

Psalm 61:2-4

Psalm 61 is a beautiful song. So many times, as I read the psalms, I long to hear them sung in their original arrangements. I imagine sitting in a courtyard in Jerusalem in 980 BC listening to this psalm being sung by a choir, accompanied by the stringed instruments. David was a king who was a worshiper as well. His songs have filled the hearts of people for nearly 3,000 years. This is one of those I consider most special. I ponder the meaning of these lines. I don't gloss over them. I let them sing to my soul. I allow the words of the king's testimony of his God wash over me. I imagine how I would have responded as I listened to them being sung.

I long to dwell in the tent of the LORD forever. One day, because I have been redeemed, I will literally dwell with the LORD forever. I long for that day. In that day, I will be with my LORD and my God, free from the presence of sin. I will take shelter beneath His wings for all eternity. One day I will be in His presence and He will hold me fast. O, how I long for that day as I rejoice in Him here and now.

*Father, I long for the day that I dwell with You in all your glory. I love that You dwell with me here and that You have given me the Spirit as a deposit of that which is to come. Help me to dwell in You here as You dwell in me, even as I wait. Amen.*

November 14-19, 2016



Monday, November 14, 2016

## Sacrifices

Psalms 51-52

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken spirit and a contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.  
Psalm 51:17

Sacrifices are not easy for me. It is so hard to put aside my self. I look so often to my interests and my needs and how others can sacrifice to meet my needs. I do the same with God. I appreciate His sacrifice, but it does not always lead me to respond with the sacrifice that will bring me into His presence. This powerful psalm is written by David after Nathan confronts him about his sin with Bathsheba. David sees the depth of his sin. He had been blinded to the depths of it prior to the confrontation, but after, his heart was broken because of his sin. This is godly sorrow that leads to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:8-12). This is not sorry that he got caught, or even sorrow about the hurt that it caused in this world. This is a sorrow that it was a sin against almighty, holy God. Each of my sins are committed against the lover of my soul. I must come to a place where I grieve over the impact my sin has on my relationship with God. Then I can truly repent and find the freely given forgiveness and restoration He longs for us to have. Psalm 32 :5 reveals what David felt like prior to repentance. The sacrifices God requires are a crushed heart, a heart that is contrite and broken before Him, without pride. God is the One who then comes and heals that broken heart, turning it from a heart of stone to a heart of flesh.

Father, please help me see my sin in all its vileness. Help me be repulsed by it and its impact in my life. Help me bring you the sacrifice of a broken spirit and a contrite heart that is soft toward you. Place that heart within me please. Amen.

Tuesday, November 15, 2016

## Fool

Psalms 53-54

*The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, and their ways are vile; there is no one who does good.*  
Psalm 53:1

A fool in Scripture is a person who ignores realities. There is no greater reality than God. To say there is no God is to ignore His absolute and real presence. He has made Himself known to all who will open their eyes to see. This psalm is a restatement of Psalm 14. They are nearly identical. David reveals that a fool who chooses to declare that there is no God will turn away from Him and will become completely corrupted. Left to my own understanding, I will create a god of my own design and the god that I design will allow me to embrace my sin as good. This god I design is my idol. It is foolish to say there is no God, because, in that statement, a person has declared who their god is. Everyone worships something. What one gives worth to becomes one's god. Any other god that I bring into my life turns my heart from the one true God. Following what I believe the other gods are leading me to do causes me to do nothing that is good in God's sight. This does not mean that people are unable to do good things, but the right thing done with a wrong motive is sin. Apart from God, I long to please myself and that is my motive for whatever I do apart from God.

*O LORD, keep me from being a fool. Empower me to do good things because of the relationship that You have restored me to with You. Continue to remove the vile things from my life that I have given a foothold to through my time of foolishness. Amen.*

Wednesday, November 16, 2016

## Afraid

Psalms 55-56

*When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?*  
Psalm 56:3-4

What is the perspective I need to have when fearful situations come into my life? David reveals it for me in this psalm. There are so many situations in my life that can cause me to be fearful if I lose the perspective mentioned here. Lift praise to God. Exalt the name of God. Rejoice because of the majesty of God. Thank God for what He has done. Remind myself that I can trust in Him. He is trustworthy. He is over and above anything that comes into my life. There is nothing that can happen to me on this earth that can take me from His grip. I do not need to be afraid. In his prayers to God, David mixes his cries for help and his cries of lament with his statements of truth about almighty God. In so doing, he reassures himself of the power of God and the truths that he knows about God. The way to defeat the lies that fill my mind in the midst of potentially fearful situations is to rehearse the truths of God that I have come to know. Repeat them over and over, if necessary, to remind myself of God's greatness in my life and in all of creation. Be exalted. O God, I will put my trust in you.

*O LORD, You know the things in my life that can bring moments of fear. Forgive me for not seeing those things as a lack of trust in You. It's hard sometimes, Lord, to remind myself about this. The situations seem so overwhelming. Thank You for Your patience as I retrain my mind to keep focused on You. You are my refuge and my rock. Amen.*

Thursday, November 17, 2016

## God Most High

Psalms 57-58

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed. I cry out to God Most High, to God, who fulfills his purpose for me. He sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me; God sends his love and his faithfulness.*  
Psalm 57:1-3

David has fled from Saul. He has taken refuge in the shadows of a cave. From those shadows, he calls out to God. He cries for mercy. He calls the God Most High. This is El Elyon. This name of God expresses the extreme sovereignty and majesty of God. It calls to His highest preeminence. David is calling out the name of God that signifies the great power and majesty of God. But it also denotes that God is over the entire universe. As David uses that name of God here, it reminds me that David is the one who will be king. Very quickly, this psalm moves from David thinking about himself to crying out to El Elyon to have His name be over all the heavens. He is reminding Himself that it is about God. While he calls for mercy, he remembers that the shadows of the cave are not the place of refuge. It is in the shadow of the wings of almighty God where true refuge is found. In the shadow of the wings of God Most High, I rest in His love and His faithfulness until the disaster has passed and I am reminded that it is not about just rescuing me in His mercy, it is about God's sovereignty over absolutely everything.

*Be exalted, O Most High God, in my life and in the world. May Your glory be over all the earth. Remind me often that I can find refuge in the shadow of Your wings where Your love and faithfulness grasp me like an embrace that cannot be broken or shaken. Amen..*