

**TRUTH B-P CHURCH**  
**Adult Sunday School**

**PSALM 57 – BE THOU EXALTED, O GOD!**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**“To the chief Musician, Altaschith, Michtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave.”** This psalm is to be handed over to the chief Musician in order to regulate the manner of playing with the music that accompanied it. It was followed by “Altaschith” which has the literal meaning “destroy not.” It was likely used to play to the tune that was to follow the mood of the psalm. Psalm 57 used the sombre mood of one who is pleading to God that he be not destroyed.

“Michtam of David.” “Michtam” means an “engraved poem.” Why is the poem or this psalm engraved? It is hard work to engrave words upon stones. It tells of the significant of the content of the poem that is being engraved. It was believed that this “michtam” was engraved upon gold to show its preciousness and excellency. These are the golden verses of David. It was likely written during his reign as the great king of Israel.

“When he fled from Saul in the cave.” This is the context of the psalm. This is one of the several psalms given the occasion and context in which the psalm was written. And it is very helpful because we know what is exactly happening. And we can put ourselves in David’s shoe as we go through his experiences. He was forced to leave his home and city, away from where he belonged and run for his dear life. It was a very tense situation. But it was at such a situation that David draws even closer to God.

**II. IN MY CRY (verses 1 to 5)**

**Verse 1, “Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until *these* calamities be overpast.” (synonymous parallelism; emblematic parallelism)**

God is exalted when He is remembered by His people as the only One who is in control, not themselves, not the enemy, not the devil. That has always been the psalmist’s heart towards God. Whenever he is in trouble, the first person he goes to is not man, but God. God deserved to be exalted in this way as the psalmist cried unto Him.

The psalmist, being the king’s fugitive, cried out to God for mercy instead of the king. He began the same way as the last psalm, except that he repeated it twice in this psalm. David may be fleeing from Saul, but there is no way he will be harmed without God’s permission. Therefore, David did the right thing by pleading for God’s mercy.

The “calamities” here are not the natural disasters like earthquakes or typhoons, or anything destructive due to nature. They refer to human enemies who set themselves against God and His people. David has confidence in this God that he will be under safe hands till all the enemies are destroyed.

**Verse 2, “I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth *all things* for me.” (synthetic parallelism)**

David knew his place before God. There is none above Him at all. Therefore, David exalted Him as the most high God. Even though God is the highest, it does not mean He is so far away that no one can approach Him. David declared that He is a “God that performeth all things for me.” He is a personal God who draws near to His people. He is willing to bless them and provide them for all their needs. The next verse testifies.

**Verse 3, “He shall send from heaven, and save me *from* the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.” (synonymous parallelism)**

Living in a world that is void of truth and love, believers must realize that this world is not their home. They may be in the world but they are not of this world. As such, believers who are living according to God’s will and desire will not be spared from the wiles of the devil. Every day is a spiritual battle. It is a Christian’s struggle against sin all the time until the Lord calls him home. The world seeks to destroy us so that we may fail God and be drawn further away from him. This has always been the aim of the devil to cause God’s people to turn their back on their Creator. Therefore, we need His mercy and His truth to be protected from the spiritual darkness of this world.

**Verse 4, “My soul *is* among lions: *and* I lie *even* among them that are set on fire, *even* the sons of men, whose teeth *are* spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.” (emblematic parallelism)**

Lions are fierce animals. Who will survive in the midst of the angry and hungry lions? Yet the psalmist described himself being surrounded by “lions” ready to tear him into pieces. These lions are set on fire, meaning to say that they were very vibrant, full of energy, not a sign of weakness and sleepiness at all. Ended up in their hands is as good as gone. They were all ready to destroy anyone who comes in their way. David knew his circumstances very well. He knew his life can be taken any time if not for God’s mercy and truth.

**Verse 5, “Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; *let* thy glory *be* above all the earth.” (synonymous parallelism)**

The language here is clearly one that seeks to magnify God to the highest, even above the heavens. No doubt, the psalmist may be suffering because of his enemies, but the focus is not on him but God who is the greatest of all. Even in his suffering, he knew that God is in control over his life and death, not his enemies. God truly deserved to be exalted by His people. If they won’t, who will? Yes, David exalted God in his cry because of all his troubles and distress due to the enemies. But he did not stop here. He turned his cry into praise which we are going to see for the rest of this psalm.

### **III. IN MY PRAISE (verses 6 to 11)**

**Verse 6, “They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen *themselves*. Selah.” (synonymous parallelism)**

The manner in which the enemies of David sought after his life goes beyond just “playing catching.” They laid snares as would a fowler did to the birds. King Saul, with his best men who are experienced in warfare, probably drew plan after plan how to get David.

We draw comparison to the Lord Jesus how his life was also in danger always because of the Pharisees and scribes who were jealous of Him and wanted to get rid of Him. They came up with traps in order to find fault with the Lord to give them “good” reason to take Him. However, they were caught by their own traps, not realizing that the One whom they were dealing with is the eternal Son of the most high God.

Likewise, David’s enemies fell to their own pits in which they designed for him. Their strategy is not in any physical traps but the use of mental discouragement against David. David said, “... my soul is bowed down.” They sought to demoralize David in order to make them give up. Did they succeed? No doubt David was discouraged for he was turned into a fugitive for no just cause. However, God strengthened his faith and therefore David pressed on and did not give up. And so their strategy did not work on David at all. Their plan failed miserably.

**Verse 7, “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.” (synthetic parallelism)**

From cry to praise. This has always been the divine order of a child of God who is learning to trust in God while going through difficulty. David confessed that his heart is fixed. And twice he said this. What does he mean? The word “fix” means to be ready and established. In other words, David is saying that no matter what happened, his heart for God is ready and established. He will never waver in his trust towards Him. The foundation of his faith is laid sure and firm within his heart.

**Verse 8, “Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.” (synonymous parallelism)**

The “glory” here refers to his own soul. It means something that is weighty within him. The only thing that carries weight of importance is his soul. It is not the physical body as the body will die one day. The Lord Jesus said, “What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world but lose his own soul? (Mark 8:36). God wants man to see the importance of his soul and to do something about it. Man’s soul is spiritually dead because of sin. It needs to be revived again. And only God through Christ can do it.

**Verse 9, “I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations.” (synonymous parallelism)**

The psalmist is not going to keep the whole thing in silence. He is going to declare and shout out loudly what God has done for him. God is to be exalted even among the people. There is a confession to be made by God’s people for what God has done so that the whole world will know and bow down to God. Let the world see and hear the joy of God’s people living out their life joyfully and happily. Let the world also come and exalt God to the highest. Let the world forsake the god of this world, Satan, and repent and come and put their trust in the One living and true God.

**Verse 10, “For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.” (synthetic parallelism)**

It is mercy and truth again. These two are the inseparable brothers who go hand in hand. Indeed, the whole world deserved to perish because of the greatness of their sins but God is merciful to save them. He led them to the gospel of Jesus Christ whereby they receive salvation. God could have let them perish without any salvation. That is their rightful portion. Yet God has mercy, and how great is His mercy? The psalmist says, His mercy “... is great unto the heavens.” In other words, God’s mercy is beyond our human comprehension. It is so great that there is nothing that can measure its greatness. God’s mercy is unlimited and is everlasting.

Truth would demand justice and righteousness to be fulfilled as well. God's mercy is not dispensed by covering up sin. Truth would reveal who God is in His fulness. So God is defined not just by His abundant mercy, but also His infinite grace, love, justice, righteousness, faithfulness and many more. That is the beauty of His truth which He revealed to us in His Word. Again His truth is unlimited and nothing can measure the greatness of His truth. It is unmeasurable. It is from everlasting to everlasting.

**Verse 11, "Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: *let thy glory be above all the earth.*" (synonymous parallelism)**

This is a repeat of verse 5 and it is worth repeating. For God is exalted by the praise He rightfully deserved. Praise to God truly knows no boundary. In fact, there should not be any boundary because He is the God of all His creation. He is the Creator and all things were made by Him and for Him.

As the psalmist continues to flee for his life, running away from king Saul who sought after his life, he remains faithful to God whom he is determined to exalt Him all the days of his life. May we learn from David from his cry to praise as he exalt the Lord his God to the highest. When we know that we are in God's good hands, there is nothing to worry at all. His mercy and truth will be with us to the end. May God help us. Amen.