

Psalm 59 • Deliver me from my enemies

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Psalm 59. It says here, when you look at Psalm 59, that this was written when David, or of David, when Saul sent men to watch his house in order to kill him.

He wrote,

"1 Deliver me from my enemies. O my God, protect me from those who rise up against me;

2 deliver me from those who work evil, and save me from bloodthirsty men.

3 For behold, they lie in wait for my life; fierce men stir up strife against me. For no transgression or sin of mine, O LORD,

4 for no fault of mine, they run and make ready. Awake, come to meet me, and see!

5 You, LORD God of hosts, are God of Israel. Rouse yourself to punish all the nations; spare none of those who treacherously plot evil.

6 Each evening they come back, howling like dogs and prowling about the city.

7 There they are, bellowing with their mouths with swords in their lips- for "Who," they think, "will hear us?"

8 But you, O LORD, laugh at them; you hold all the nations in derision,

9 O my Strength, I will watch for you, for you, O God, are my fortress.

10 My God in his steadfast love will meet me; God will let me look in triumph on my enemies."

(Not hard to tell where the statements of, or the declarations of faith are. Right? We just read them.)

11 Kill them not, lest my people forget; make them totter by your power and bring them down, O LORD, our shield!

12 For the sin of their mouths, the words of their lips, let them be trapped in their pride. For the cursing and lies that they utter,

13 consume them in wrath; consume them till they are no more, that they may know that God rules over Jacob to the ends of the earth.

14 Each evening they come back, howling like dogs and prowling about the city.

15 They wander about for food and growl if they do not get their fill." (ESV)

By the way, wild dogs were common in that day. Dogs weren't as common as household pets. Most of them were wild and they ran in packs and people were afraid of them. They carried disease. They attacked people. They attacked sheep and herd, whatever, goats and... Dogs were... That was one of the reasons the Jews referred to the Gentiles as dogs. It was a very negative connotation in their mind.

But notice how David, two times in this Psalm, makes reference to these howling, roaming packs of evil people that he likens to dogs who are prowling around, growling and so forth. And, if they don't get their fill.

Verse 16,

"But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress.

17 O my Strength, I will sing praises to you, for you, O God, are my fortress, the God who shows me steadfast love."

Can I encourage you to take at least a portion of verse 16 and write it down somewhere in your Bible. And speak it when you are praying in times of distress. And say this, *"For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress."* What that is, that's just a reminder. It's a...

You remember how the Jews used to build altars as, an altar of remembrance? When they crossed the Jordan, they took rocks. And all the...one from each tribe. They took big stones and built an altar, just as an altar of remembrance. This is, what the Lord did.

And sometimes it's good for us to do that in prayer. Come around to those altars of remembrance and just speak those words to the Lord. Lord, as I'm praying about this, as I'm lifting up this need to You, I just, I want to declare that You've been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress. You've been faithful to me in the past and I believe, God, that You're going to be so again.

And that's a pretty amazing statement in light of what David is saying in this psalm. Because he goes into some pretty intricate detail characterizing his enemies. As we said, as these howling, growling pack of dogs that are roaming around looking to tear the flesh off something. And yet in light of all of that, these final verses are so beautiful because you see how David saw his relationship with God in the midst of the fear that can rise in his heart related to what was happening.

What happens to your relationship to God when you're fearful? What happens to your relationship to God when you're going through a hard season? How does it affect your walk with God? Do you get bummed? Do you get quiet? Do you withdraw? Do you run to Him? Because that's what David did.

Here he is telling about all the difficulties that he's dealing with. And you see in verse 16 and 17, just this declaration of love. He says, "*...I will sing of your strength.*" In fact, I mean, I'm not going to just (Pastor Paul lowers his voice to sound meek) sing kind of like down like this. He says, (Pastor Paul raises his voice in strength) "*I'm going to sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning.*"

And then he even refers to God in verse 17 as, his strength. "*O my strength.*" "*O my strength.* I'll sing praises to you, because you're my fortress. You show me your steadfast love. I don't just hear about it. You show it to me. And what David had learned is that the hard times in his life were opportunities to remember God's faithful plan.

I forget that sometimes. I think that hard times in my life are there just to be hard. But I forget. I forget that hard times come so that I can be reminded of God's faithfulness, His steadfast love. And so that it can actually deepen my relationship with Him.

I think it's important that you and I get to the point where we begin to ask the question, Lord, how does this hardship fit into Your purpose and plan for my life? How does it fit in?

Let me end with a couple of slides from Romans chapter 12, the writer of... I'm sorry, Hebrews chapter 12, I said Romans.

Hebrews 12:7-11 (ESV)

It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whose father is not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them.

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Hebrews 12:7-11 (ESV)

Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he, disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they (our fathers) disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, (Some of them did a good job. Some of them did a pretty poor job.) but he, (God) disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. (Well, here's the bottom line.) For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

And those last words are incredibly important. Because, you see, that tells us hardship doesn't automatically have a positive effect. It only has a positive effect for those who've been trained by it. And that means those who come to the Lord and say, how does this, that You have allowed in my life, work into Your purpose and Your plan for my life?