

Quiet Hearts in Noisy Times Hoping in God

Psalm 62

January 15, 2012

Speaker: Pastor Mark Schindler

📌 [Slide 1. - Main Title]

📌 [Slide 2. - Introduction]

A man stood atop a hill looking up into the inky blue of the night sky. As he looked to the stars he traced through his past from the carefree days of a boy, on to the adventures of a young man, and finally to the heavy responsibilities of leadership. He felt alone as the coolness of night enveloped him. This shouldn't be happening to him. He wasn't just any man. He was the leader of one of the most powerful nations. And despite his rising from humble beginnings his name was now admired and feared by all.

He looked down the hill at the fires and tents in the valley below him. This was definitely a far cry from the life of servants and comfort he had become used to. It had not an easy road to becoming the head of a nation. He had faced many obstacles during his rise to power; he had been chased and even went into hiding to save his life from those who had opposed him. He had trusted God during those times of running. Even during those years he became popular with the people as he hoped and waited for God to defeat his enemies.

Eventually, that day came and he became a great leader. He would be the first to tell you of his many mistakes along the way. But he was a godly man and the Lord had prospered and guided him. And even with all his material means he still loved the Lord with all his heart. He was a man at the height of his career enjoying the fruit of hard work and the blessings of the Lord. After years of conflict with surrounding nations his people were enjoying peace. His power and position had brought him wealth and he enjoyed the love of a nation.

Yet now he was running again. He would have smiled at how ironic it all was if it was not all so painful. Just days ago it would have seemed impossible that he and his family would find themselves fleeing the capital city. A political coup had forced him to flee for his life. And what was worse, the uprising was being led by his own son; a dear son whom he loved. But also a son whose mind had been twisted and filled by deceitful advisors interested in gaining their own positions of power. Looking back he could see the signs of discontentment and bitterness. But he never thought it would come to this.

And now, alone with his own thoughts, he bowed his head to talk to God and pray. Oh how his heart ached for his family, for his son, and for his nation. He wondered how it would end. In the midst of his prayer he struggled with fears for himself and his family. But as he recalled God's faithfulness, his fears began to subside and his hope was strengthened. Even in this he determined that he would not be shaken because his hope and faith were in the almighty God. And with a silent Amen, King David walked back down the hill to join his family and the others in the camp below.

It could have been on a night such as I've just imagined that David wrote Psalm 62. This is one of several Psalms written while he was being pursued by his son Absalom. Those were difficult days for David. Imagine the vanity of a son whose passions and dreams of glory and power would drive him to attack and seek the life of his father. Imagine the aching heart of a father fleeing for his life at the hands of a son whom he loved. Imagine the personal loss of a family whose power, wealth, friendships, and comfort disappeared in a moment as they fled the dangers of deception and sword.

One could understand that David might wonder where God was in the midst of such loss, anger, fear, and emotional strife. Was this to be the ultimate end of the man after God's own heart? One could understand David's concern not only for himself, but for his family and those who had remained loyal to him. One could understand the gnawing questions and doubt turning around in his mind. Why had God allowed this to happen? What about the promises God had made to him? Where was the rest that David was to have from his enemies? How would the House of David and the future of his kingdom continue to be established? Think about all that was at stake for David in Absalom's rebellion.

Despite all of this and probably far more than is revealed in scripture, Psalm 62 is not a song of fear and doubt. Rather, and perhaps surprisingly, it is a declaration of satisfaction and confidence in God. It is a meditation on the calm and rest found in waiting upon the goodness of His providence and care even in the worst of circumstances. It is a reminder of the never-failing grace that supports and strengthens when we are weak and frail. Here is a song of hope and comfort that blesses our soul and soothes the restless and weary heart. And in the bigger picture, Psalm 62 is an affirmation that salvation is found in God alone.

Our passage this evening is addressed to the Choirmaster or the chief musician. When we read and study the Psalms it is important to remember that the passages of text are songs and poetry in their style and structure. They were to be read aloud and sung to music. This Psalm is no different. Its beautiful imagery and depth of meaning weave a rich tapestry that reveals a steadfast hope in God against the backdrop of a world that is against us.

The structure of this Psalm is laid out in three sections of four verses that each contain two parallel thoughts. The sections are separated by a Selah, or a pause in the song. The term Selah is found in the original Hebrew text and was likely used as a musical instruction to the worship leader to pause and give an interlude between sections of the song. Not only did this give structure to the song, but it may have also allowed for a time of personal reflection and praise as it was used in corporate worship.

The song then follows a flow of communications out of each section. The first part of this Psalm is found in the first four verses where the song makes a declaration of hope aimed toward one's adversaries. In the next four verses the song provides an exhortation to hope aimed toward the people of God. The final four verses are a reflection on hope aimed toward God. The overall song could be summarized as the hope of salvation that is found in God alone. David's hope in God for salvation against his adversaries becomes a picture of the hope of salvation for the people of God against the adversaries of sin and a fallen world. It points beyond the horizon to Christ who is our Salvation. This Psalm is ultimately about hope and confidence we can have in God while living in a fallen world that often attacks and fails us.

Let's begin with a word of prayer and ask God to help us as we study this passage today.

① [Slide 3. - Psalm 62 – Hoping in God]

Follow along as I read the first four verses of Psalm 62. Here is what God's word says. *"1 For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. 2 He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken. 3 How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence? 4 They only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse."*

The initial four verses of this Psalm express a strong declaration of hope. Despite the attacks of evil men and the afflictions of a fallen world, David sees clearly both the faithfulness of a sovereign God and the evil of his enemies. These are essential truths that calm and give strength to the battered soul. When the attacks grow strong, we must first declare that strength and power belong to God alone. And second, remember the fallen nature of our adversaries. They will not prevail against us. Rest and refuge is found in God alone. There is no other.

The first pair of verses speaks to the assurance and security that is found in God alone. The Psalmist's soul rests as it waits calmly and quietly upon the Lord. He is not troubled or greatly shaken. The picture here is of a stillness and inner quietness that is resting on a solid rock. It rests and hides itself in the protection of an immovable rock and a strong fortified tower. For the believer today, these are both allusions to Christ who is the firm foundation and defender of our salvation. He is not only deliverance as our redeemer, but He continues as our faithful, unchangeable, and powerful advocate before the Father who sent Him. And when life dishes out its worst and we become discouraged, we can confidently rely upon Christ alone.

The next pair of verses declares the affliction and deceit of men in contrast to the salvation from God. We can hear and understand the weariness in David's words. The world kicks you when you are down like a leaning wall or tottering fence. It is often when you are tired and weak that you are tried and tested. You may tremble; you may feel threatened; and you may lean and sway. But it is when we are at these most vulnerable points that we see most clearly it is Christ who is carrying us through; and know most fully we are safe and secure in Jesus who is our refuge and strength.

You don't have to be that much of a student of human nature to observe the world loves calamity. It loves to see the high, the wealthy, the powerful, and the righteous brought down. Nothing gets TV ratings like death and disaster. The sinful nature is drawn to the crisis and misfortune of others. Such were David's enemies as described in verse 4.

Furthermore, the song reminds us that the world thinks nothing of lies and deceit. David has it right when he says that they will publicly praise and flatter you while inwardly they are seething against you. Brothers and sisters do not be surprised or angry when sinners act like sinners. Give them the Gospel. And if you cannot do that, at least give them grace. But do not put your hope or confidence in men. They will disappoint and fail you. God alone is worthy of our trust and he alone can sustain and deliver us through life's trials.

Allow me one further observation on these verses. Their aim appears to be toward one's adversaries. Note how David addresses his attackers as "all of you" in verse 3. Also note that verses 1 and 2 are nearly identical to verses 5 and 6. But there are subtle differences in wording that clarify who is being spoken to here. So where the first section here is declarative, the second we will see, is more of a self-exhortation.

It appears that this confident declaration in salvation is made as much to David's enemies as it is to himself. As such, we are to see that part of the purpose and plan of difficulty and suffering is to allow God's people to stand firm and declare His salvation. The majesty of the cross in the life of the believer is illustrated in a powerful way as it hopes and rests in Christ in a way the world cannot understand. Our hope in the midst of struggles and pain is a clear and confident declaration of salvation in Christ alone to a lost and hopeless world. We must never lose sight of a watching world and the opportunity to handle trials in a way that reflects the light and power of the Gospel.

Let's continue with verses 5 through 8. Follow along as I read. *"5 For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. 6 He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. 7 On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God. 8 Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us."*

The second section of this Psalm is a heart-felt exhortation to hope. If rest and refuge is truly found in God alone then what is to be our response? What do we say to encourage ourselves and others? Well, first we must continually remind ourselves of our complete dependence upon God. Our faith will be strengthened when we remind ourselves and each other that everything rests upon the sovereignty and power of God. We must tune out the noise and lies of the world that constantly bombard us. And when the voice of our adversary distracts and discourages us, peace and solace will be found when we tune our ears to God's word and meditate on His faithfulness.

The first three verses here form a self-exhortation to find one's assurance and security in God. As I noted, verses 5 and 6 are nearly identical to the first two verses of this Psalm. But here David speaks to himself. We are to declare salvation not only to the world, but also to ourselves. The phrase "O my soul" here is a reference to the essence and inner being of who we are. The rest that comes from God is not shallow or fleeting. It penetrates deeply to the soul and cannot be moved. There is also a sense here of commanding one's inner self to wait upon God alone. This is not a "let go and let God" kind of faith that is devoid of any effort on our part. Rather we are to actively and intentionally wait upon God **as** He gives us hope.

Another difference in verse 1 and 5 is that the Psalmist changes the word salvation to hope. Not only does our salvation come from God, but he is the source of our hope. What a blessing to know that our hope is not just "in God", but that it is also "of God." He is both the object and giver of our hope. In fact, he is the exclusive source. That emphasis is made clear in the text through phrases like "God alone", "He only", and "On God rests". He alone is our rock, our salvation, our fortress, our glory, and our refuge. And if He is all these things then dear friends, we may securely and confidently rest that the mighty hand of God shall **forever** be our hope and our salvation.

The final thought in verse 8 turns to encourage those who are hearing or participating in this song, that God is forever a refuge and comfort for men. We are to trust in him at all times; in every season of life and in all things. There are no boundaries to His care and comfort. There are no time limits placed upon His mercy and grace. We are never beyond the reach of His loving arms. He is worthy of our absolute trust.

Nor is He ever too far to hear us. He is always before us and as His people we are encouraged to pour out our hearts to Him. He who has shown us His favor, invites us to share our worries, heartaches, and doubts with Him. In Christ we have the marvelous freedom to approach the throne of God and tell Him of our suffering and pain. The idea here is of emptying oneself and spreading out our cares before our King. And there, emptied at His feet we find perfect rest in the One who is our refuge.

Note also that in verse 8 the song extends the encouragement from "O my soul" to "O people". What is true for the worshiper individually is true for the people of God as a whole. We take refuge in God not just singularly, but together as the people of God. "God is a refuge for **us**" says God's word. God is my refuge, and your refuge, and He is our refuge together. You see the confidence and blessing and hope we have in God is shared as a community; as the people of God. Likewise, the suffering, despair, and weakness we have individually are to be shared together. And as we share in these things and encourage one another, we are to be a community that quietly and patiently waits upon the Lord for the hope of our salvation. And until that day we will wait and rest in the truth that He alone will prevail for us.

Follow along as I read the last four verses of Psalm 62. Here again is God's word. *"9 Those of low estate are but a breath; those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath. 10 Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them. 11 Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God, 12 and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For you will render to a man according to his work."*

The last section of this Psalm culminates in a reflection on hope. The song not only reflects here, but the communication is now aimed toward God. In verse 12 the phrase "to you, O Lord" points our gaze toward heaven. True worship happens when we understand the greatness and glory of our God and all else pales in comparison. So as we look to Him, we are to remember the fruitlessness of placing our trust in the things of this world. David contrasts the frailty and vanity of human life with the sovereign power and love of an almighty God. As we reflect on the hope we have in God we are to view the lowliness of our own position. Only God is able to bring about what He wills in the lives of men. All power belongs to Him. Our lives are truly in His hands. And if I may say it boldly, any thought to the contrary is a laughable and pathetic illusion.

The first thought of this last part of the Psalm is found in verses 9 and 10. The song paints a picture of the weakness and corruption of men. The imagery here is rich. Our lives are but a breath. A wisp of air in and out of the lungs. There is no respect for the lowly or those of high position. Compared to God, all that we could offer or hope in is lighter than air and contributes nothing to weigh down the scales. In God's economy the absolute best we might contribute of our own effort adds no weight to the balance.

It is interesting that David, a wealthy and powerful King, warns us not to be deceived by position or to trust in quick and corrupt means to gaining wealth. The world sets its hopes and dreams in the glitter and gold of this world; by whatever means it may be obtained. And while extortion and robbery may seem beneath us, who among us has not used manipulation or deceit as a means to personal gain. But we are not to be tempted by evil or foolish schemes. And even if we are blessed with wealth and prosperity by godly means, we must not hold onto it tightly nor set our confidence in the power it brings.

The last two verses of this Psalm remind us of the power and love of God. Those who put their trust in the riches of this world will be disappointed. The simple and greater truth here is that God alone is powerful. Power belongs to God. Do not doubt this. It is as sure as the eternal and unchangeable word of God who has spoken it and was twice confirmed to David's ear. The outcome of all we do is dependent upon the blessing and goodness of God. It is He who rewards or renders to man. And it is in Him we must place our trust.

Now if we have not been humbled by the absolute power of a sovereign God, then surely we will be undone by His unwavering love. His power does not crush or punish us as we deserve. Instead His love surrounds and protects us as His people. Do we need any more reason to trust and hope in God? Is there anything more that is needed to compel us to acknowledge our complete dependence and rest before our Lord? Then let us fall upon His mercy and grace and find eternal refuge in the God of our salvation. Let us worship our God who does not render to us according to our sinful and rebellious works, but has poured out upon his church a steadfast love. And let us pour out our hearts in praise before him in return for God alone is our refuge and hope.

📌 [Slide 4. - Reflect and Respond]

What a wonderful Psalm. It speaks to us when life hurts and is difficult. It reminds us to place our hope in God alone when life causes us to despair. It encourages to us to worship God in the stress and difficulty of trials. Real life is full of disappointments and heartache and pain. This may surprise our youth and perhaps some of you, but God expects and allows us to experience suffering. Why? Because He wants to strengthen our faith and demonstrate His power so that He receives the glory. Through our suffering we will hope less in ourselves and the things of this world and more in the God who made it all. And that is a very good thing.

There are a number of points to make as we reflect upon this Psalm. First, I find it an odd thing about our faith that we trust fully in God for redemption from sin and hell but we struggle with trusting Him for refuge in this life. Please listen here. Faith that believes in God for salvation **beyond** this life should hope no less in God for salvation in the difficulties **of** this life. The God who will safely carry us over the threshold from this world into heaven is certainly able to carry us over the threshold of life's trials. The One who brought us rest and peace when the wrath of God threatened us can surely give us rest and peace when the circumstances of life move against us.

A second point is that we should find great comfort that God is in control. He is a sovereign and loving God. The more I remember how dependent I am upon His care the more I move into His loving arms. Even what I see as calamity and difficulty is still His will. What I see as unexplainable and beyond my ability to understand is still a part of His purpose and plan. Remember Joseph, and that God can take the worst in your life and turn it around for our good and His glory. That kind of confidence in God will carry you through the worst of times, the hardest of circumstances, and the greatest of loss. We may not know the why or see the larger picture, but we can trust completely in the One who has the power to work all things according to His plan.

A final point to reflect on is that we often focus too much on ourselves in the midst of trials. Psalm 62 is about hoping not in ourselves but in God. David points our thoughts to His faithfulness and power. Salvation is found in no other. If you are struggling with depression and discouragement look to Christ. Remind yourself that He is your refuge and strength. Take your mind off the self-serving, Christ-doubting "noise" that wells up in your thoughts and drown it out with the truth of God's word. Isaiah 26:3 says, "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you." If you want to have hope and trust in God, then keep your mind stayed or focused on Him and He will give you rest. When you plant yourself deeply in His word and stay close in prayer you will find a peace that is only of the Lord.

📌 [Slide 5. - Psalm 62 Reading]

As we close this evening, I would like us to read Psalm 62 antiphonally. So we are going to divide the room in half down the middle; and this side will start and read the odd verses and this side will read the even verses. Please read and listen carefully to the words of this song as we read them together.

- 1 *For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.*
- 2 *He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.*
- 3 *How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence?*
- 4 *They only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse.*

📌 [Slide 6. - Psalm 62 Reading]

- 5 *For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him.*
- 6 *He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.*
- 7 *On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God.*
- 8 *Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.*

📌 [Slide 7. - Psalm 62 Reading]

- 9 *Those of low estate are but a breath; those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath.*
- 10 *Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them.*
- 11 *Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God,*
- 12 *and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For you will render to a man according to his work.*

Closing Prayer