

“Trusting in God” Psalm 28

Introduction

Ever had “one of those days”? You shake your heads in agreement and we haven’t even discussed the particulars. We all just know we’ve had them, don’t we? Ever uttered the expression, “stop the world, I wanna get off” because life is just flying past and the commotion of the day, week, year is just a little too much at the time. We just past the mile stone of a new year...did you pray anything like, “please God, make it better than last year”? Life can be chaotic and noisy. Life can be downright hard. Sometimes the noise is not just noise; sometimes it’s the sound of the enemy attacking, sometimes the sound of the flesh, and sometimes the sound of a serpent slithering.

Pastor Russ introduced this series last Sunday evening and we’ll continue it tonight, it’s entitled “Quiet Hearts in Noisy Times. That noise can be a lot of things as I just said. Here in Psalm 28 that noise is likely the noise of the enemy, ready to draw blood. Our Psalmist, David, is in a fight for his life, perhaps physical and definitely spiritual. So we want to travel not to ancient Israel, but past that, we want to travel into the heart of the King. We want to see what’s going on in David’s heart as God allows the volume to be turned up.

Here’s the question I want to answer as we go through the Psalm. *What do people who trust in God believe?* You might be saying to yourself, “Michael, I don’t know what it looks like in everyday life to trust in God”. Fair enough, we have a good, sovereign and wise God that has given us his word to answer just such a question. Let’s ask for his help in this task.

Prayer

So, what do people who trust in God believe? Here is Psalm 28 they believe four things. Let’s start where David starts. People who trust in God...

Believe He is listening (vs. 1-2)

1 To you, O LORD, I call; my rock, be not deaf to me, lest, if you be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit.

“To you” Notice first and foremost where David heart turns when trouble comes. He heads straight to God. Surely David, of all people, knows that this is the sovereign God of the universe who has allowed his troubles. Even so, a heart that trusts in God runs to him no matter the situation. As Job reminds us, “The LORD [gives], and the LORD ... [takes] away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” (Job 1:21)

“O Lord, I call” After heading to God what does he do? He calls and addresses him as Lord. Why? Because David believes His God is listening! There is no benefit in talking to statues of ivory, wood or stone. That is the work of madmen. David is talking to God Almighty. Why talk to your friends about

your troubles or some sort of religious person, not that those things are bad, but isn't God the best option. That's what David does. Let's look back and see what he says to God.

"my rock," David calls God his "rock". It will become clearer as we move along through the psalm, but just note what is meant by rock. It's a place of stability, is it not? All of you regular Bible readers know this is hardly the only time God is called "rock" in the Bible and there is so much more meaning, but for now – think stability in times of trouble.

"be not deaf to me, lest, if you be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit." David not only knows that God is listening, but he understands what happens to those whom God chooses not to listen to. Surely this is the essence of Hell. Knowing God could hear you and save you but because of your rebellion against him he has stopped listening to you. He has turned his ear away from you and will not answer your cry for help. But Praise be to God this is not what happens when God's children cry out to their rock. When his children cry out with their mouths....he listens!

2 Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy, when I cry to you for help, when I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary.

In light of knowing what would happen if God did not listen he prays again that God will hear his please for mercy. How? Not only by crying out for help with his mouth, but lifting up his hands "toward your most holy sanctuary". David enlists not only his heart and his mouth but his body for the act of prayer. Have you been here? Have you lifted your hands to the Lord in prayer out of a desperate sense of need? David knows he is hopeless without God and he does the only thing he can do, he raises his voice and his hands to almighty God and prays. He sees God in his holy sanctuary and he can't help but to reach out to him in his spirit and with his body.

People who trust in God believe He is listening and act on that belief in prayer.

Let's move on to vs. three through five where we see that those who trust in God...

Believe His judgments are righteous (vs. 3-5)

3 Do not drag me off with the wicked, with the workers of evil, who speak peace with their neighbors while evil is in their hearts.

David's prayer changes as we step into the next stanza of our Psalm and we see the character of these people God is not hearing. He starts of asking God to not treat him as a one of the wicked and then we see what people left to fend for themselves without a hearing God act like. Notice two things here;

1. The wicked are *workers* of evil. They do not sit passively by waiting for an opportunity to visit evil upon others, but they are active and out there seeking to do evil. I can't help but see a comparison to the work of prayer in the first two verses and the work of evil in this one.

2. What they show on the outside is not what is going on on the inside. These people are smooth talkers who lull their neighbors into believing one thing while they set the trap for their gain and the forward push of evil in the world.

Then we move on to verse four and David seems to really let 'em have it. Do you pray like this? Listen to what David says,

4 Give to them according to their work and according to the evil of their deeds; give to them according to the work of their hands; render them their due reward.

Wow. That's quite the prayer request isn't it? Give what they deserve Lord, he says in the ear of their creator. David hasn't prayed that he gets what he deserves has he? I wonder why. I wonder what the difference is between David and these wicked folks who say one thing and mean another. Why do they deserve their due reward and David doesn't? See if you hear the answer in the next verse.

5 Because they do not regard the works of the LORD or the work of his hands, he will tear them down and build them up no more.

David is not seeking to send these folks off to their "due reward" for sinning against him. He does not want to cast people in the abyss because they didn't talk to him at the water cooler this morning. No, He is in this for the Glory of God. He wants them to receive their due reward because they have not given God His due! This is not about David. This is about God! This is what David has been about all along - the name of the Lord! And look how he couches the whole thing. They should be dealt with according to the work of their hands and God should be glorified according to the work of His.

How many times do we stand by and question God about the eternal state of this person or that person? Now, how many times have you asked God to treat them in the same way they have treated Him. Forget about your personal feelings and pray that they would receive their just reward according to his judgment. Pray that people would regard the works of the Lord and the works of his hands and let God be God.

People who trust in God find rest in a world broken and marred by sin because they believe that his judgments are righteous.

...and they...

Believe He is their refuge (vs. 6-7)

6 Blessed be the LORD! For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy.

After much prayer and agreement with the Lord we see God's response to David and David's response to God. First God has heard the voice of his child and David response is to praise God for not only His listening ear but a heart that is inclined to mercy for his children.

7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

David, with a heart full of thankfulness and affection for God lists what he believes to be true about his listening, righteous God.

1. The Lord is my strength and my shield – when he is weak and defenseless he’s not overcome because he belongs to God
2. In him my heart trusts – When he is unsure what the future holds he can be sure that God alone is in control because the past present and future belong to God.
3. I am helped – He is not alone in his day to day struggle for life in this world. He has a friend who is omnipresent; he is always there when he needs him. He is an always listening ear.
4. My heart exults – Do you know what the definition of exult is? It’s this; to be joyful or jubilant. How can David not be when he has a God like this!
5. With my song I give thanks to him – And when you know a God like this, even in the midst of the noise your heart will break out in songs of thanksgiving to the Lord that will drown out the noise of this life.

People who trust in God believe that he is their refuge and they rest in Him.

If the psalm ended there wouldn’t it be enough?! Wouldn’t it have been enough that God listened? Wouldn’t it have been enough that his judgments were righteous? Wouldn’t it have been enough that he is a refuge for the believer? Oh yes, it would have been enough. It would have been enough just for him to be God! But he is not satisfied with just being God he is all of these things and more!

And almost as if to say, “Don’t worry about your believing friends either”, he ends with verses 8 and 9.

People who trust in God...

Believe He is a refuge for all of God’s people for all time (vs. 8-9)

8 The LORD is the strength of his people; he is the saving refuge of his anointed.

David has come from asking God to listen, to agreeing with his judgments, to praising him for his being his own refuge and now we see him move out beyond himself to the people of God as a whole. We can see that his heart is still full from the praises of the last two verses and here he goes on to praise God for all of his people. Again we see that the Lord is not only David’s strength as in vs. 7, but the strength of all his people and it gets better, listen close, the Lord is the saving refuge of his anointed. Now I know David was God’s anointed, but David has gone way beyond himself here, I looked up anointed and do you know what the definition in the New Bible Dictionary is? It’s this; “Signifies holiness, or separation unto God”! Now who does that sound like? That sounds like God’s people for all time, not just David.

9 *Oh, save your people and bless your heritage! Be their shepherd and carry them forever.*

Well it doesn't end there. It gets even better. You can almost hear him yelling this out with hands still raised to God's holy sanctuary, "Oh, save your people and bless your heritage!" What my dear friends is God's heritage. Or should I say who. Who is God's heritage? It is us! It is you believer David is yelling out in praise to God that he save and bless you. Why is your heart troubled? Why are you downcast and depressed in the midst of the turmoil of the sinful fallen world? You have a God how saves and blesses and King David the man after God's own heart was praying/praising God for you all the way back then!

You might think we were done, but we can't be. Our God is too good. Our God is too loving. Our God is too amazing. Look down at verse nine again. What is this? Not only is he a saving and blessing God. Not only was King David praying/praising him for you all those years ago, but look, we have a shepherding God - one who cares deeply and tenderly for us. He may prepare a table for us in the presence of our enemies, but the great shepherd of the sheep will be with us to anoint our heads with oil. And church pay special attention to the last three words in this verse. Trouble will come. Pain may be our constant companion and we may be beaten to the point where we think we will never be able to walk in this life again, but I tell you be not troubled, your saving, blessing, shepherding God will has picked us up and will carry us home to our heavenly reward because he is that kind of God!

People who trust in God believe he is a refuge for all his people for all time!

Reflect and Respond

What do you believe?

For those of you who have never believed on Jesus Christ and repented of your sin before him let me say this.

1. You have no listening God. You may as well pray to your sneakers as seek God for anything in your time of turmoil and need. Don't fool yourself into thinking that when the hard times come God will certainly be listening for your voice, I tell you he won't. As David prayed he will not regard your work of prayer because you have never regarded the work of his hands.
2. You will be judged. On that final day you will stand naked before God with your arms full of the dirty rags you call your good works and say, "but I was better than so and so", or "I think I did more good than bad". God will turn his face from you and cast you out into hell for eternity. There will be no second chance and God's judgment of you will receive a hearty amen from his people gathered around his throne.
3. You have no refuge here or in eternity. The storms will come my friend. Death, pain and suffering are felt by all of God's creation and you will be no different. However you will find no relief from the terrible wrath of God. You will find no shepherd to guide you and you will have no one to carry you home. You will live and die in you sin and there you will stay without Christ forever.

If any of that falls on your heart like the anvil it is meant to be than perhaps God is listening to you right now. Perhaps he has granted you ears to hear the Gospel, the good news, of his Savior Son Jesus Christ. Reach out to him in prayer as David did and ask him to save you. He will. He is a saving kind of God.

Believer

1. When the noise is so loud that you cannot think, turn your heart to God in prayer, he is listening.
2. When sin seeks to overtake and you think the unrighteous might have it made the right choice – remember he will judge in his time and it will be right.
3. When the arrows of enemies and friends fly at you like a thick black cloud. Hide in your savior the only sure refuge in times of trouble.
4. And when we, church, are weary and ready to faint thinking this world might overcome us, we must fall like a little child into the merciful arms of God, our refuge, and he will carry us home to our rest.

Calm your heart amidst the turmoil of this world and trust in God by believing His word.