

150 Days in the Psalms

*"Deliver me from my enemies, O my God;
protect me from those who rise up against me;
deliver me from those who work evil,
and save me from bloodthirsty men." Psalm 59:1-2*

As you read through Psalm 59 you can hear the pain in David's cries as he pleads for deliverance from his enemies. This Psalm was written during a time of great distress in David's life which is recorded in 1 Samuel 19. Saul's heart was full of hatred and jealousy towards David whom he saw as a threat to his reign as king. As David played his lyre, Saul tried to strike him with a spear but David was able to flee that night. Saul instructed his men to keep watch on David so that he could kill him in the morning. David then received word of this plot from his wife so he was able to escape in the night. It was at this point that David became a fugitive who was on the run from Saul's wrath. It's easy to picture the distress behind David's words in this Psalm, yet he places his trust in God alone for his deliverance. Even in his darkest moments David is still able to sing praise to the God of Israel, his rock and foundation.

When our adversary (Satan) surrounds us with all of his accusations and temptations we may be tempted to give up. Instead, let us pray with David this Psalm of deliverance. We know that we cannot face our enemies on our own and we also know that we don't have to. Christ has gone to battle for us on the cross and He has won for us our deliverance through the shedding of his sacred blood. We may feel like fugitives in this life here on Earth, but God has brought us into His Kingdom where he continues to be our fortress and rock, our sure protection against evil one.

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Psalm 57

Monday



The 57th Psalm is a psalm of prayer in which David once again complains about Saul and his servants--away from whom he crawled into the cave. It has the same meaning as the preceding psalm. Therefore we should make use of it also against the tyrants and their venomous counselors and slanderers, who twist God's word to us. They have the fangs and tongue for such work, which are--as David says--spears, arrows, and sharp swords. But thanks be to God, who does not desert us, but hurls them into the pit which they have prepared for us. Their plots finally come down on their own heads.

¹Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me,

for in you my soul takes refuge;

in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge,

till the storms of destruction pass by.

²I cry out to God Most High,

to God who fulfills his purpose for me.

³He will send from heaven and save me;

he will put to shame him who tramples on me.

God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness!

⁴My soul is in the midst of lions;

I lie down amid fiery beasts—

the children of man, whose teeth are spears and arrows,
whose tongues are sharp swords.

⁵Be exalted, O God, above the heavens!

Let your glory be over all the earth!

⁶They set a net for my steps;

my soul was bowed down.

They dug a pit in my way,

but they have fallen into it themselves.

⁷My heart is steadfast, O God,

my heart is steadfast!

I will sing and make melody!

⁸Awake, my glory!

Awake, O harp and lyre!

I will awake the dawn!

⁹I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples;

I will sing praises to you among the nations.

¹⁰For your steadfast love is great to the heavens,

Prayer

Almighty, everlasting God, through Your only Son, our blessed Lord, You commanded us to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us, and to pray for those who persecute us. Therefore, we earnestly implore You that by Your gracious working our enemies may be led to true repentance, may have the same love toward us as we have toward them, and may be of one accord and of one mind and heart with us and with Your whole Church; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Psalm 58

Tuesday



The 58th Psalm is a psalm of comfort against the stiff-necked teacher who stubbornly carries through with his error, stops up his ears, and does not let himself know anything, but in addition, threatens to devour the godly. The psalmist comforts himself, using five comparisons, that they will not carry out their intentions--Yes, they will not accomplish half of them: 1) There comes at times a great flood with a terrible roar, as if it would carry away every- thing, but it flows away and does nothing. 2) A crossbow may be a severe threat, but when arrow, string, and bow are broken, it does nothing. 3) A ship slug stretches out its antennae, but before it moves it is dried up or melted away. 4) A stillborn child enlarges the mother's womb, as if it will come as a baby, but dies before it sees the light. 5) A thornbush may strike out with many spikes and threaten with pricks and scratches, but before it becomes fully developed and hard, a raging hatchet descends on it and bids the thorns to creep into the oven and become ashes. Though all of these intended to be great and proceed with success, nevertheless nothing shall come from them.

¹Do you indeed decree what is right, you gods?

Do you judge the children of man uprightly?

²No, in your hearts you devise wrongs;

your hands deal out violence on earth.

³The wicked are estranged from the womb;
they go astray from birth, speaking lies.
⁴They have venom like the venom of a serpent,
like the deaf adder that stops its ear,
⁵so that it does not hear the voice of charmers
or of the cunning enchanter.
⁶O God, break the teeth in their mouths;
tear out the fangs of the young lions, O Lord!
⁷Let them vanish like water that runs away;
when he aims his arrows, let them be blunted.
⁸Let them be like the snail that dissolves into slime,
like the stillborn child who never sees the sun.
⁹Sooner than your pots can feel the heat of thorns,
whether green or ablaze, may he sweep them away!
¹⁰The righteous will rejoice when he sees the vengeance;
he will bathe his feet in the blood of the wicked.
¹¹Mankind will say, "Surely there is a reward for the righteous;
surely there is a God who judges on earth."

Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, You would have all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. By Your almighty power and unsearchable wisdom break and hinder all the counsels of those who hate Your Word and who, by corrupt teaching, would destroy it. Enlighten them with the knowledge of Your glory that they may know the riches of Your heavenly grace and, in peace and righteousness, serve You, the only true God; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Psalm 59

Wednesday



The 59th Psalm is a psalm of prayer and can very well be spoken in the person of Christ, who lamented over the Hebrews. He prophesied that they would not be annihilated, but dispersed into all the world where they teach nothing but curses and lies, as they up to this time had always done. All their teachings stand arrayed against Christ, to condemn and disavow Him. Thereby they have their reward: they come into the city at evening like hungry dogs and yet find nothing. That is, from the time of the apostles to the end of the world they are pursued by the Gentiles from one land to another--searching, desirous and hungry, for a place where they can again raise up a kingdom or a domain, but it will not happen. They remain hungry dogs and chase around until, left without anything to eat and without a kingdom, they are burned and cast off to hell.

The psalm however can also be understood from the history of David against his "Saulites," who are finally without a kingdom also and must wander around like hungry dogs until they were totally destroyed. For Saul's family never again came to the kingship, although they strived for it with eagerness and effort.

¹Deliver me from my enemies, O my God;

protect me from those who rise up against me;

²deliver me from those who work evil,

and save me from bloodthirsty men.

³For behold, they lie in wait for my life;

fierce men stir up strife against me.

For no transgression or sin of mine, O Lord,

⁴for no fault of mine, they run and make ready.

Awake, come to meet me, and see!

⁵You, Lord God of hosts, are God of Israel.

Rouse yourself to punish all the nations;

spare none of those who treacherously plot evil.

⁶Each evening they come back,

howling like dogs

and prowling about the city.

⁷There they are, bellowing with their mouths

with swords in their lips—

for “Who,” they think, “will hear us?”

⁸But you, O Lord, laugh at them;

you hold all the nations in derision.

⁹O my Strength, I will watch for you,

for you, O God, are my fortress.

¹⁰My God in his steadfast love will meet me;

God will let me look in triumph on my enemies.

¹¹Kill them not, lest my people forget;

make them totter by your power and bring them down,

O Lord, our shield!

¹²For 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,

¹³consume 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.

¹⁴Each evening they come back,

howling like dogs

and prowling about the city.

¹⁵They wander about for food

and growl if they do not get their fill.

¹⁶But 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.

¹⁷O my Strength, I will sing praises to you,

for you, O God, are my fortress,

the God who shows me steadfast love.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, before whom all in heaven and earth shall bow, grant courage that Your children may confess Your saving name in the face of any opposition from a world hostile to the Gospel. Help them to remember Your faithful people who sacrificed much and even faced death rather than dishonor You when called upon to deny the faith. By Your Spirit, strengthen them to be faithful and to confess You boldly, knowing that You will confess Your own before the Father in heaven, with whom You and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, now and forever. Amen

Psalm 60

Thursday



The 60th Psalm is a psalm of thanks in which David thanks God that He has given him an excellent kingdom in which God's word was taught and there was good orderly government, which truly is a precious jewel. Before David, in the time of Saul, the government was disunited and chaotic, as the first three verses declare. The Philistines plagued them sorely, so that they did not take much care even for the ark of God (I Chron. 13[:3]). Also evil things prospered, along with much unrighteousness. So it must be, where God is not at home. David's example also points out well that Saul had evil rogues in place in his court.

Yet (he says), God kept a sign in place for His own [v. 6), so that they might rise up and praise Him. Through it they could be sure and secure in His grace. This sign was the tent of Moses and the Ark of the Covenant with the seat of grace, which ark He also brought out of the land of the Philistines with great wonders, etc. Before the Ark they prayed and called on God and were accordingly delivered from their distress.

Thereafter, David lists his land and people, beginning with the holy places and God's word, then Shechem, Succoth, Gilead, Manasseh, Ephraim, Judah, Moab, Edom, Philistia. Finally, he gives a confession concerning these things: to have a fortified city, that is, good peaceful government; to have victory over Edom, that is, to prevail over people

and land and in the middle of battle--these are not man's doings, but God must give them. Why he names no more lands or tribes than the nine he names, belongs in a commentary rather than this summary.

We can say this psalm in praise of God, that He has extended His church into the wide world and into many parishes and seminaries, where each one may have the word of God and all have their various gifts.

¹O God, you have rejected us, broken our defenses;

you have been angry; oh, restore us.

²You have made the land to quake; you have torn it open;

repair its breaches, for it totters.

³You have made your people see hard things;

you have given us wine to drink that made us stagger.

⁴You have set up a banner for those who fear you,

that they may flee to it from the bow.

⁵That your beloved ones may be delivered,

give salvation by your right hand and answer us!

⁶God has spoken in his holiness:

“With exultation I will divide up Shechem

and portion out the Vale of Succoth.

⁷Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine;

Ephraim is my helmet;

Judah is my scepter.

⁸Moab is my washbasin;
upon Edom I cast my shoe;
over Philistia I shout in triumph.”

⁹Who will bring me to the fortified city?
Who will lead me to Edom?

¹⁰Have you not rejected us, O God?
You do not go forth, O God, with our armies.

¹¹Oh, grant us help against the foe,
for vain is the salvation of man!

¹²With God we shall do valiantly;
it is he who will tread down our foes.

Prayer

Lord God, creator of heaven and earth, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we praise You for the abundant mercy that You this day so richly have provided us, blessing us not only with daily bread for our bodies but also with heavenly food for our souls. Grant that Your living and powerful Word may abide in our hearts, working mightily in us to Your glory and for our salvation. We commit ourselves to Your divine protection and fatherly care. Let Your holy angels be with us that the evil foe may have no power over us. Look in mercy on Your Church and deliver it from all danger and adversities. By Your Holy Spirit comfort and strengthen all who are in affliction or distress, and grant Your abiding peace to us all; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen

Psalm 61

Friday



The 61st Psalm is a psalm of prayer against the enemy and especially for the king and those in authority, that they fear God, rule long and well, and that good government not be destroyed by enemy and war. For, as Solomon said, [cf. Prov 28:2]: Because of the land's sin, many and various princes perish. But where there are many rulers, they seldom go wrong. What one constructs, another breaks up. As the saying goes, "New king, new law." And yet continuous changing of the government is always dangerous and harmful; but well for the land where they long continue an old, good system of government.

¹Hear my cry, O God,

listen to my prayer;

²from the end of the earth I call to you

when my heart is faint.

Lead me to the rock

that is higher than I,

³for you have been my refuge,

a strong tower against the enemy.

⁴Let me dwell in your tent forever!

Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings!

⁵For you, O God, have heard my vows;

you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.

⁶Prolong the life of the king;

may his years endure to all generations!

⁷May he be enthroned forever before God;

appoint steadfast love and faithfulness to watch over him!

⁸So will I ever sing praises to your name,

as I perform my vows day after day.

Prayer

Eternal Lord, ruler of all, graciously regard those who have been set in positions of authority among us that, guided by Your Spirit, they may be high in purpose, wise in counsel, firm in good resolution, and unwavering in duty, that under them we may be governed quietly and peaceably; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Psalm 62

Saturday



The 62nd Psalm is a psalm of instruction concerning the false confidence in men and the true confidence in God. There are many who, having the favor of a prince or a noble, or the good will of the rich and powerful, think that they need nothing more, and then do much harm. Particularly, where they see a tottering wall [v. 4), that is, when they notice that someone is not well looked upon in the palace, or else is in need and is persecuted by another so that he cannot defend himself, then they all become knights and they thoroughly flatter and play up to the great nobles. They do not see how entirely vain is such trust in men and also do not believe, until it happens, how thoroughly it goes wrong. Therefore, it is said, trust God and do wrong to no one that stands before God or man.

¹For God alone my soul waits in silence;

from him comes my salvation.

²He only is my rock and my salvation,

my fortress;

I shall not be greatly shaken.

³How long will all of you attack a man

to batter him,

like a leaning wall, a tottering fence?

⁴They only plan to thrust him down from his high position.

They take pleasure in falsehood.

They bless with their mouths,

but inwardly they curse.

⁵For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence,

for my hope is from him.

⁶He only is my rock and my salvation,

my fortress;

I shall not be shaken.

⁷On God rests my salvation and my glory;

my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

⁸Trust in him at all times, O people;

pour out your heart before him;

God is a refuge for us.

⁹Those 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.

¹⁰Put no trust in extortion;

set no vain hopes on robbery;

if riches increase, set not your heart on them.

¹¹Once God has spoken;

twice have I heard this:
that power belongs to God,
¹²and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love.
For you will render to a man
according to his work.

Prayer

Lord God Almighty, even as You bless Your servants with various and unique gifts of the Holy Spirit, continue to grant us the grace to use them always to Your honor and glory; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Psalm 63

Sunday



The 63rd Psalm is a psalm of prayer in which David, when he had to flee into the wilderness from Saul, desired to be in the holy place and hear God's word. He laments over the "Saulites" who seek his life so that he cannot come there and thus must be deprived of the word of God. But he meditates, nevertheless, on the promise and God's choice of him to be king and he comforts himself with these in the meantime. Now however people can pray this psalm who willingly hold onto God's word under the tyrants and yet must be deprived of that word. They must consider themselves still as God's children and heirs, since they have faith and love in His word, until their "Saul" finds his end.

¹O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;

my soul thirsts for you;

my flesh faints for you,

as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

²So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,

beholding your power and glory.

³Because your steadfast love is better than life,

my lips will praise you.

⁴So I will bless you as long as I live;

in your name I will lift up my hands.

⁵My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food,

and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,

⁶when I remember you upon my bed,

and meditate on you in the watches of the night;

⁷for you have been my help,

and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.

⁸My soul clings to you;

your right hand upholds me.

⁹But those who seek to destroy my life

shall go down into the depths of the earth;

¹⁰they shall be given over to the power of the sword;

they shall be a portion for jackals.

¹¹But the king shall rejoice in God;

all who swear by him shall exult,

for the mouths of liars will be stopped.

Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, You desire not the death of a sinner but that all would repent and live. Hear our prayers for those outside the Church. Take away their iniquity, and turn them from their false gods to You, the living and true God. Gather them into Your holy Church to the glory of Your name; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

