



LWML Sunday 2018

2018 LWML Sunday Sermon

Text: Psalm 62:1–8

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“The Rest We Share”

Social media have brought more information to our electronic devices than ever before. These media give us instant news with live interviews of people experiencing situations in their lives. Some of this has been a blessing to people in need. Rescuers bringing assistance to people in times of a crisis like a hurricane can receive calls, texts, emails, and messages from people who need help. First responders can pinpoint where these people are and where the nearest rescue team is to bring help and assistance.

But social media have, for many, raised the level of fear and uncertainty about their safety and even future. Church and school shootings, terrorist acts, and threatening Facebook postings are just a few things that have robbed many of any sense of security or peace. Instead of the world moving closer and closer to peace and love, the world is moving closer and closer to destruction. Hatred and division are on the rise while love and peace seem to be losing.

Where does a person go for peace and security in an uncertain world like ours? Hiding will not help. We are all brought face to face with the reality of insecurity.

King David was familiar with the insecurity of his world. David wrote Psalm 62 sharing his own uncertainty and where he found peace and rest. He was under a serious attack from an enemy or enemies who wanted to overthrow him as king. There are hints in Psalm 62 that David is an older man when he wrote the Psalm. He uses the phrase, “like a leaning wall, a tottering fence,” to describe himself. One does not build a wall to be leaning or a fence to be tottering, but after time this could happen to a wall or fence. Some Bible scholars believe that this Psalm might be a reference to the revolt by Absalom, David’s son, when David was an older man.

You might remember that Absalom would rise up early in the morning and stand by the city gate engaging people and telling them how their lives would be better if he were king. The Bible tells us that Absalom “stole the hearts of the men of Israel.” After doing this for four years he gathered his supporters at Hebron and declared himself king.

When this news came to King David, he had to flee Jerusalem quickly, and if it weren’t for God’s spirit moving Absalom to believe bad advice and thereby not immediately pursuing King David, David might not have survived this attack. Certainly David was in a very precarious situation.

Whatever situation David was in when he writes this Psalm, he shares with us his strong response to threat and uncertainty. This Psalm proclaims David’s strong faith, and it proclaims where we find rest and peace when we are confronted with the threats and uncertainties in our world. Rest and peace are found in God alone. He is the rock, fortress, and salvation we need.

You may have heard about Melissa Falkowski, a journalism and English teacher at Parkland High School in Florida, who hid 19 students in her classroom closet when she learned there was an active shooter at the school. This heroic woman is a reflection of God who hides you in the shadow of His wings as evil rages (Psalm 57:1). What other eternal refuge can there be than the God who sent His Only Son to defend us and give His life for us. What did Jesus do? He was like Assistant coach Aaron Feis at Parkland who stepped in front of students to protect them from the assault. Aaron Feis gave his life for his students. On the cross, Jesus took what would crush you and died in your place. The only place you can find lasting rest in this turbulent world is in the One who conquered death and gives you life. Through the living Word, you receive rest. Through the presence of Jesus in Holy Communion, you are hidden in Jesus’ grace, strength and forgiveness. This world will rage. It may even injure you physically and emotionally. But Jesus, who is Lord over all, is your rock of protection and your salvation.

Psalm 62 is different from most Psalms. Psalms usually describe the bad situation the writer is experiencing and the prayers or petitions asking God for help. Psalm 62 does not include a prayer or petition but makes a strong statement of faith and confidence while alluding to a challenging situation. Psalm 23 is another example of a Psalm without any request of God. Psalm 23 declares God to be our Good Shepherd, and though there might be challenges even to the point of death, God is present through all of the challenges as the Good Shepherd. Psalm 62 declares God to be our rock and salvation, the one who gives us rest and quiets our souls. Whenever we come across such Psalms, we should take a closer look at them because they are Psalms that declare the greatness of God and therefore encouragement for living. David serves as a witness to God's grace and rescue. He is calling out from history that we, too, have a Good Shepherd. We, too, can trust God as our rock and salvation

David does not use the usual Hebrew word for "rest" which means a physical and emotional rest. David uses a less familiar Hebrew word that is translated "silent" or "silence" as is used in the ESV translation. This Hebrew word goes beyond physical and emotional rest. It invites us to stand in the presence of Almighty God not saying anything and not bringing anything, but in silence receiving the peace that God our rock and salvation gives us no matter what is happening around us.

David recognizes in the first part of this Psalm that his challenges come from people who use lies and falsehood to bring him down from his place of honor. He describes their actions as outwardly blessing David with their mouth, but inwardly cursing him and wanting him defeated. David inserts at this place in the Psalm the word "Selah." It is thought to be a notation for the singers, musicians, or reader to pause and calmly think about what has been said.

Up to this point, David has declared that his soul waits in silence on God alone. God is his rock and salvation, and he will not be greatly shaken. He follows this strong statement of faith with verses 3 and 4 describing the actions of those who want to defeat him. As we ponder what David has written, words of Jesus might come into mind when He said in John 8 that the devil is "the father of lies." This "Selah" time helps us move from the physical to the spiritual. The devil desires us to fall down from our place of honor as children of God. He will challenge us to doubt God's forgiveness and love for us. We are in a spiritual battle against a mighty foe, but because of who God is and His commitment to us, we say with David, *For God alone my soul waits in silence, from him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.*

Our arch enemy would like for us to prove to God that we really deserve His love and forgiveness because of what we've done. There is no rest in this approach to God. We are constantly wondering whether we have done enough. God invites us into his presence to stand in silence and receive from him His love, based on His actions.

There is one more "Selah" in Psalm 62. It comes at the end of verse 8 after David speaks to his soul telling it to wait in silence for God alone. He repeats much of what he said in verses 1 and 2 but adds a dimension of honor and glory that are his because God is his rock and salvation. Then David focuses on us when he says, *Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah.*

In a turbulent and frightening world, this is the gift we've been given. Listen to the Apostle Paul as he describes the harrowing journey of God's people through the wilderness in the Old Testament: *For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them. And what was the spiritual rock that followed them and sustained them through flood and heat and scarcity and fear? Paul says this: And the Rock was Christ (1 Corinthians 10:1-4).*

You've read and heard about many heroic rescues during the flooding and destruction of Hurricane Harvey. You've seen the stirring photos and have been moved by the accounts of self-sacrifice. But there was a much greater storm than Harvey. The storm of sin and death engulfed humanity. All of us were stranded helplessly by the floodwaters of our fallenness. And that is where the greatest rescue in the history of the world unfolded. Jesus as our rock and our salvation came and bore our sins and just punishment on himself. He is the one who was promised to Adam and Eve; the one who died and rose from the dead to give us great confidence and assurance no matter who attacks us or what is happening around us. In Jesus we stand before the Father with our soul silent, receiving life abundantly and salvation from Him.

Many congregations in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod are celebrating and thanking God for the ministry of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League. For 76 years the LWML has been supporting mission work nationally and internationally. The women truly are Lutheran Women in Mission, and they are also women of encouragement. The LWML hasn't just been collecting pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters in their mite boxes; they have also been encouraging women and men in their faith walk to find true rest in God alone.

Over the 76 years of ministry, the LWML has lived through major challenges in our world and country, and even in their organization. Through all of the challenges and uncertainties, the LWML has placed their trust in God and have looked to Him for direction. Lives have been touched through their work and people have received rest that comes from our Lord and Savior, Jesus.

Let us be encouraged in our own witness by the witness of the LWML. There are people all around us that struggle with insecurity in this fast-changing world. We have true rest to offer them in a God who loves them and gave His Son for them. Let's live in this rest and share it with others.

David lived in uncertainty and so do we. David received from God a certain physical and emotional rest, and he also received a silence – a rest that nothing in this world of insecurity could take away from him. We have this same assurance as we live in this uncertain age. It is the gift we can stand on because our God is our rock and salvation – the one who loves us and sent His Son to redeem us thereby restoring the right relationship with God. Let us say daily, “My soul finds silence in God alone.”