

“Psalms: Week 6”

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2025 - MICHAEL BOWERS



Summary - “Psalms: Praise and Worship”

This week we look at Psalm 57, a Psalm David wrote while running from King Saul and hiding in a cave, as recorded in 1 Samuel 22. In this chapter, we read about the fear that David feels, yet the God that he trusts, finds refuge in, and whose glory is over all the earth. Psalm 52, 54, 56, 57, and 59 - link together to depict the period of David’s life when he had been anointed to become the future king of Israel, had defeated Goliath, and began to gain notoriety and popularity among the people of Israel. The current king, King Saul, became jealous and tried on multiple occasions to search for David, and potentially have him killed. In fact, in 1st Samuel 21, it is recorded that when David would arrive in the cities, people would cry out, “Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” As we can imagine, this struck David with fear because he knew the current king, King Saul, desired to squelch David’s popularity. Though David is on the run, and hiding from a king and army that are seeking to destroy him, we will still see David take us from the verge of destruction to boisterous worship through this incredible Psalm. He will walk us through the importance of turning to God as our place of refuge and protection when we face hardships. He will show us the importance of continuing to pray and worship through the hardships and for God’s name and glory to be known through them. Ultimately, he will show us that as true worshippers of God, we can awaken those around us, and ultimately the world, to the God of the heavens, the God of Glory in any circumstance. As we study this week let’s continue to ask this key question of our own walks: Are we living a life that AWAKENS people to see a God of refuge, grace, and truth, or are we living a defeated life - roaming, bitter, scowling, and miserable?

Scripture - Psalm 57 “God’s refuge, protection, and glory”

Be 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. 2 I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me. 3 He will send from heaven and save me; he will put to shame him who tramples on me (Selah) God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness! 4 My 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. 5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth! 6 They 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. (Selah). 7 My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast! I will sing and make melody! 8 Awake, my glory! Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn! 9 I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations. 10 For your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. 11 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!

Key Apps, Websites, and Online Tools for Further Study

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- <https://biblehub.com/>
- <https://www.youversion.com/>
- <https://www.bibleref.com/>
- <https://bible.org/>
- <https://netbible.org/>
- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/>
- <https://www.gty.org/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
- <https://carm.org/>
- <https://dwellapp.io/>

Further Scripture Study

1 Samuel 18-22 (or even more as this story reads like an epic); **Psalm** 52, 54, 56, **57**, 59; Matthew 11:28-30; Philippians 4:6-8; 2 Timothy 4:18; James 5:7-12

As you study the scripture verses provided for this week, study for right context and right questions...

Right Context:

- The verse itself and key word(s) that stand out in the verse (meanings)
- The verses around the verse, the section of scripture, the chapter, the book, old/new testament, and relation to the rest of scripture
- Author and Date (Who wrote the book and when?)
- Audience (Who is the book written to? Main characters in the story and/or text?)
- Main points and overall purpose of the book
- Historical background, cultural significance, setting, people, rulers, etc.
- Scripture references; let scripture interpret scripture as much as possible

Right Questions:

- What does this passage say?
- What does this passage mean to its original audience?
- What is this passage teaching me about God?
- What does this passage tell us about man?
- What does this passage demand of me? (Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a sin to avoid? How is this applicable to me?)
- How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (What actions must I take in response to this passage?)
- What does this passage prompt me to pray? (For God, for others, for my community, for family, etc.)

Key Thoughts

As we work through Psalm 57, David will take us from the verge of destruction to boisterous worship.

David begins this Psalm asking God for mercy. "Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me." David is crying out, God, accept me with your whole heart. This is a man on the run. And he is seeking the Lord's protection and favor. He had already been anointed king, defeated Goliath, and was on the warpath for the kingdom; now, he is physically being hunted, but his character is also being attacked. GOD, I need your gracious favor. I need your mercy. (Psalm 57:1a)

As David is asking God for mercy due to his distress, he also understands that God is a shelter, a place of refuge. "...for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge." David understood that true safety from Saul was found not in a cave, but in the Lord. And so it is with us as well. (Psalm 57:1b)

We learn from David that although we may experience seasons of security from the things of this world, as he had, he continues to say that when we experience those things, it is because of God's grace.

All of the scripture echoes this refuge language of David. This is precisely the rationale of the Apostle Paul in his final days in prison: "The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:18).

David came to the cave for temporary physical safety. But David reminded us where he found his ultimate safety, "the God Most High," for his direction. (Psalm 57:2)

A place of refuge is not a refuge unless you place yourself under its protection. David knew who to cry out to and surrender himself under. David knew where to turn for protection but also knew God would work for God's purposes. And this is one of the hardest lessons for us to learn and return to in our lives, especially when the weight of this world, the impact of sin, and the brokenness of this world are pounding upon us.

Taking refuge in God means that we turn toward Him. It means turning from false refuges –all the familiar, self-reliant ways we seek to solve or escape life's problems. The addictions we seek to cover up our pain temporarily. We must repent of such things as control, perfection, manipulation, withdrawal, anger, and escaping the truth.

A refuge is a place of protection and where restoration can begin. When we face hardship, we must turn to God for refuge. We do this through prayer, worship, time in His Word, time in His creation, time among His people.

Key Thoughts

What will God deploy to defend David from his enemies? Steadfast love and faithfulness. Christopher Ash gives a great breakdown of this in his book *Psalms for You*: "It is worth pausing to think about the words "steadfast love" and "Faithfulness." The Hebrew word translated as "steadfast love" (here and often in the Old Testament) is often translated into "grace" in the Greek version of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint. And the word "faithfulness" is often translated by the Greek word for "truth." So, when you read "steadfast love and faithfulness," think "grace and truth." We shall meet this pair of words again in verse 10; they are essential for understanding this psalm. (Psalm 57:3 & 10)

We are to trust in God's grace and truth to save us, to strengthen us, to guide and lead us, but also for us to be examples for those in our lives who are searching for refuge in shelters that are temporary and incomplete.

The world cries that its refuge is in "hope in myself, my desires, my wishes", but when the hardship of this world strikes, where does this leave the false refuge many of us have in "self" or in "worldly desires and wishes"? It leaves us in distress and on the verge of destruction.

God is not your refuge unless you place your heart, soul, and mind under His care.

In verse four David compares his enemies to that of being among lions. Charles Spurgeon gave comfort and advice to believers who felt they were among lions:

- If you are among lions, you will have fellowship with Jesus and His church.
- You will be driven nearer to your God if you are among lions.
- If you are among lions, remember that God has them on a leash.
- If you are among lions, remember there is another Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

It can be easy, in seasons of hardship, to turn inward and hold back, even forget the calling we have as followers of Christ, to give glory to God. David reminds us in these seasons to pray for God's glory and name to be known. (Psalm 57:5)

David flipped the switch from the distress of being attacked by "lions, beasts, words, swords, and fears", and became fully set on proclaiming the God he knew rather than the fear he was feeling in the moment. Under God's refuge and protection, David's courage and confidence grew, not because David's situation had suddenly changed, but because his place of refuge had (from cave to the Living God). David worships the Lord and in this he is awakened to the God who is above the heavens; the God of glory. (Psalm 57:6-11)

Verses 3 & 10 both communicate God's steadfast love and his faithfulness. Verses 5 & 11 communicate the calling to exalt, praise, and lift God's name above all others.

Church...Rich Fork...we must wake up and make God's name known to the nations. (As well as, and especially the people God places in our lives.)



Key Thoughts

This is a cry of desperation that leads to action. AWAKE. AWAKE. AWAKE. Make Him known!

- By God's grace, we have forgiveness and hope.
- By God's truth, we have guidance in our daily lives.
- By God's mercy, we have hope for eternity.
- By God's faithfulness, we have a God in which we have refuge.

Notice what happens when David goes into the cave:

- His family joins him.
- Then - everyone who was in distress, debt, and bitter in soul.
- Give or take 400 men.

David, with 400 people watching (minimum), cried out to God in desperation, yet somewhere along the way, the switch flipped, and he realized he was now the commander of these people who were watching his reaction to turmoil and pain. This group watched his reaction to pain, his stance of giving glory to God, and his worshipful heart. He could either lead them to the GOD, who conquers bitterness, spiritual distress, debt, and pain, or he could have a four hundred-person grip session with his cave-dwelling friends.

We must become and remain cave dwellers. This is what David models, but ultimately, this is what Jesus modeled as well. He goes in after the hurting and welcomes those in spiritual/financial debt, those in distress, and those bitter in their soul and gathers them to him.

And now, we, the church of the living God, while we have the distressed, indebted, bitter, and broken in our world watching, we must point them to a merciful, grace-filled God. We must awaken our world by our worship of the one true God; not just on Sundays, but in every area and every season of our lives.

Reflect & Respond

Following up once more on the previous week's study in Psalm 42, what are you allowing to hydrate your heart, soul, and mind? When we are as deer panting for water, as Psalm 42 outlines, we must be cautious where we go for spiritual and emotional hydration and filling when we are desperate and weary. Where have you been going to quench your thirst?

Similarly, as we look at Psalm 57 this week, where/what do you turn for refuge? Is it temporary? Permanent?

Look around you, who has God called alongside of you that needs to see a forgiven people who long to worship the God of their salvation?

Are you living like that AWAKENS people to see a God of refuge, grace, and truth, or are you living a defeated life - roaming, bitter, scowling, and miserable?