

Sunday Night Message

March 2, 2014

Psalm 56 – What Time I Am Afraid

Series – The Psalms

Text – Psalm 56 (Read the text entirely before praying)

Introduction

"To the chief Musician upon Jonathelemrechokim, Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath."

"Michtam" – of uncertain meaning. It could mean "a poem". This is one of several Psalms that are said to be Michtams. (Psalms 16; 56 – 60) Martin Luther called it a golden jewel Psalm. J. Vernon McGee says the word means "engraven", speaking of that which is durable, lasting, and unmoveable.

"Jonathelemrechokim" – According to the Bible Knowledge Commentary, this means "a Dove on Distant Oaks". The Faithful Life Study Bible says it means "the Silent Dove of Distant Lands". Warren Wiersbe says that it could mean "the Silent Dove Among the Strangers".

Back in Psalm 55, David stated:

"And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest." (Psalms 55:6)

The title tells us that the context of this Psalm surrounds the Philistines taking David in Gath after David fled there while running from Saul. David had to pretend to be crazy in order for the Philistines to let him go. (See 1 Samuel 21:10 – 22:1 note - Psalm 34 also surrounds this context)

In this psalm we see a pattern that is very familiar in the David's psalms of lament. You will note that David's psalms won't always express these elements in the same way or in the same order, but you usually see each of these things:

- 1 He presents a problem
- 2 He offers his prayer
- 3 He rehearses God's promises

4 He expresses praise for what he trusts God to do.

Let's see if we can see these elements in this psalm.

"Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me." (Psalms 56:1)

"Be merciful unto me" – this is David's prayer request. He is asking God to deliver him, not only from the hands of the Philistines, but also from the hands of King Saul.

"Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High." (Psalms 56:2)

vs. 1b – 2 represent part of David's problem. He has enemies all around him. He elaborates a little more on his problem in vs. 5 and 6.

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." (Psalms 56:3)

"In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me." (Psalms 56:4)

In vs. 3 and 4, David determines that he will place his trust in God. What does it mean to trust God?

- 1 It means you do not veer off of his path even when it seems like he isn't there.
- 2 It means that you continue doing what you know he wants you to do, even when it doesn't make sense to do so.

Illustrate – I know God wants me to assemble with other believers in His house. When a trial comes, I remember that – I don't veer off of that path.

I know God wants me to tithe and give to mission, and I don't stop tithing when a financial setback comes my way.

3 It means that you continue to believe God and love God when the rest of the world is turning against Him

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6)

*"Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil."
(Psalms 56:5)*

*"They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps,
when they wait for my soul." (Psalms 56:6)*

If you live for the Lord, the world will mark you, and will seek to destroy your testimony, your credibility.

*"Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the people, O God."
(Psalms 56:7)*

*"Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in
thy book?" (Psalms 56:8)*

"tellest" – means to count or recount. God knows everything that we are going through. He not only has the number of the hairs on our head, he has recorded all of our tears.

*"When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is
for me." (Psalms 56:9)*

Notice that God is for you. If you are God's child, stop thinking that God is your enemy. He loves you and He is for you.

*"In God will I praise his word: in the LORD will I praise his word." (Psalms
56:10)*

We can praise God's word because it is His word that tells of God's promises. This is not the third time that this phrase is repeated in this psalm.

*"In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me."
(Psalms 56:11)*

This is the second time for this phrase. If we are God's child we need not fear what man can do to us. Man can't get to us, unless God allows him to.

"Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee." (Psalms 56:12)

*"For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from
falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?" (Psalms 56:13)*

Here David expresses that God has delivered him from death, but he asks God to help him to keep from falling.

What a wonderful reminder this is for the Christian today. We have been delivered from eternal death, but we need God's help to keep us from falling into sin.

Conclusion

Every believer goes through difficult and distressing situations in life. Our tendency is to panic and sometimes even to run away. The solution, however, is to run to God. Tell Him about your situation. He already knows anyway. Go to the word and be reminded of the wonderful promises that He has for His children. Pray to him reminding Him of His promises, and then praise Him for whatever He will do. He always does right, and He will never forsake you.

Illustrate – I was never fearful when I was close to my father.

Sing Psalm 56:3