

“When I am Afraid” ***Psalm 56:1–13***

“We have nothing to fear except fear itself.” This is one of President Franklin Roosevelt’s most famous quotes. He said this to quell the fears of the American people during the Great Depression. While many like this quote, the greater quote comes from the pen of David, the man after God’s own heart. He said in **Psalm 56:3**

“Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.”

David wrote his statement after being delivered from a very difficult situation. He is fleeing for his very life from King Saul. He has been to Nob to the priests there and he has taken Goliath’s sword and some food and fled into Philistia to the city of Gath.

David does not recognize that he is the celebrity he is in Philistia, he is immediately recognized and to escape pretends he is insane before the king. Immediately, David wrote two Psalms upon his deliverance from Achish, king of Gath -- **Psalm 34**, and **Psalm 56**. When I am down, my refuge is many times **Psalm 56**. In this song of praise and trouble David makes three statements.

I. What David Does when He is Afraid. (v. 1-4)

II. Why David Needs a Refuge. (v. 5-7)

III. David casts Himself on God. (verses 8-13)

I. What David Does when He is Afraid. (v. 1-4)

A. David’s song begins with a plea.

“Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up; Fighting all day he oppresses me. My enemies would hound me all day, for there are many who fight against me, O Most High.”

1. He feels oppressed because of all the enemies about him. Remember where David is historically. He ran from King Saul because Saul wants to kill him. He got Goliath’s sword by lying to the high priest and now he has tried to hide in enemy territory not recognizing that they will discover who he is.

2. His enemies are his enemies, and those he once counted his friends are trying to kill him too! No wonder David felt like the world was out to get him. Where do you turn when this is the case? Who can help in this helpless situation?

B. Where do you turn when there is nowhere to go? You turn to the LORD.

“Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?”

The only place that David could turn was to the LORD Himself. When you cannot trust anyone else, the one you can trust is God.

1. If we look at David's life at the moment, he had many reasons to panic. **(1)** He had to leave his wife Michal behind. **(2)** Saul his father-in-law and the very powerful King of Israel wanted to kill him. **(3)** To hide from King Saul he fled to Gath, thinking he could live incognito there only to discover the Philistines recognized him and also wanted to kill him. **(4)** He couldn't even go home; he had no home to go to. He had no friends. He had no allies. He only had God Himself.

2. Amazingly, when David turns to God, he has a resolution.

"Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?"

He, who was not afraid of Goliath, still has an acquaintance with fear. He knows what it is to be afraid. But when he tends to give in to fear, he has already decided how he will respond. He will trust in God and his faith in God and His Word. This is a lesson that we all need to learn.

3. In **1 Peter 5:6-7**, we find a little sentence that if we would practice it, it would help us immensely.

"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting [throwing it like the disciples threw their coats on the donkey] all your [anxious] care upon Him, for He cares for you."

II. Why David needs a Refuge. (v. 5-7)

A. ***"All day they twist my words; all their thoughts are against me for evil. They gather together, they hide, they mark my steps, when they lie in wait for my life. Shall they escape by iniquity? In anger, cast down the peoples, O God."***

David felt the constant, unrelenting, attack against him and his life. In **vs. 1** he wrote that his foes ***"fight all day long"*** against him. In **vs. 2**, he says, ***"My enemies would hound me all day."*** Here again in **vs. 5** he complains ***"all day"*** they are twisting his words. The pressure is continuous and there is no break. Have we ever been in a place of unrelenting pressure?

B. David practices his resolve to trust even when the trouble does not let up. How often we resolve to trust God in the situation, but when the trouble does not go away immediately, we soon cast our confidence away? Remember the Hebrews that the writer of Hebrews addresses in **Hebrews 10:35-36**.

"Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise."

C. David recognizes his only hope is, if God Himself will judge those who are tormenting him. God must act for David to be saved.

III. David casts Himself on God. (verses 8-13)

A. The end of the Psalm is David's self-reminder of what God does contently for him. First he reminds himself of God's continuous care of his life.

"You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book?"

God knows what I am doing and where I am going. He pays attention to my tears. He collects them as precious. He also records carefully every one that I shed. These three images underline God's loving care for those who are His.

B. This leads to David's confident declaration. ***"When I cry out to You, Then my enemies will turn back; This I know, because God is for me."*** This confident statement is repeated in **Psalm 118:7**: ***"The LORD is for me among those who help me; Therefore I shall see my desire on those who hate me."*** The Apostle Paul also echoes it in a rhetorical question in **Romans 8:31**. ***"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"*** How can we be certain that God is for us? We must remember all that He did for our salvation. He is for us, if we are His by faith.

C. David then rehearses the reality that is the center of his faith in the refrain of **vs. 10-11**. ***"In God (I will praise His word), In the LORD (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"***

God's word helps us trust the God of the Word. Some claim to know and trust God apart from His Word, but they cannot. It is God's word that reveals God to us. Through the ministry of the Spirit of God through His Word we learn to love and trust God. Apart from His Word, we cannot know Him.

D. Finally, David sings of his commitment to obey God because of His goodness to Him. ***"Vows made to You are binding upon me, O God; I will render praises to You, for You have delivered my soul from death. Have You not kept my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?"***

This is not David earning God's grace. It is his response to God's love and provision in a difficult spot in his life.

Do we know God through His word and thus have a living growing relationship with the Living God that is there when trouble comes?

Have we chosen when we are afraid to trust Him and to remind ourselves what He says in His Word?

Do we obey God because we love Him and not because we think it will gain us something?

May God help us to know Him like David did and to be able to flee to Him in the midst of the difficult trials of life.