

December 17, 2017
Sunday Morning Service
Series: Psalms
Community Baptist Church
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Greer, SC 29650
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REST IN GOD ALONE
Psalm 62

What is the difference between a creed and faith in God alone? A creed is a concise statement of what we supposedly believe. The problem is that it is not only possible, but likely, that we can memorize a creed and never stop to consider what it says. Therefore, a creed is not only unlike faith in God but might be recited with no faith at all.

For example, I have a friend who was reared in a very liturgical church and the parochial school connected with the church. He told me that he and his fellow classmates recited the Apostles' Creed every single day while they were growing up. To refresh our memories, the Apostle's Creed goes like this:

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.*

*I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*

*On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,*

*the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

What more could religion ask or require than that? All of those statements are truths right from the Bible. Yes, but what if the word "believe," that is repeated three times in this grand creed, really never translates into the reciter's life and practice? That was the case of my friend who was not born again by true faith in Jesus Christ until he was middle-aged. He admits that he publicly declared everyday that he believed these great truths, but at the same time never stopped even once to consider what they meant, and, therefore, what he was claiming to believe.

I think my friend's situation is repeated multiple times all over the world every day. Even among our Christian friends, how many of them when pressed by the question, "What do you believe?" would respond, "I believe what my church believes." So what does your church believe? Most people are not sure. Let's face the truth. When people join Community Baptist Church and confess publicly that they will, by the help of God the Holy Spirit, keep the spirit of our covenant, it is probably the last time most of them ever think about it.

There is nothing like a good healthy dose of reality to help us out of this plastic, make-believe kind of life where we continually talk about stuff we neither understand or believe. Nothing helps us get real with God like the bottom of life falling out. When the mockers mock us, when the zealots haul us into court, when the authorities arrest us and fine us for what we believe, we will fully understand and appreciate what David shared with us in this psalm.

When the circumstances of life get real and painful, we are likely to flee to the Bible where we learn that God is the faithful, dependable rock, fortress, refuge, our salvation and deliverance in whom we can trust. When we get a good, honest, realistic view of God, it will help us get a good view of ourselves. When we know how mighty and powerful God is, we will also realize how weak and insecure we are. That is when we truly appreciate the God in whom we can trust alone. David's heartfelt confessions in this psalm make a lot of sense to people who have reached the end of their rope and have died to self in order to let God reign in their lives.

Confident Assurance.

The psalm begins with the statement of a wonderful reality. *For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken (vv.1-2).* Who can say confidently, “God is my salvation.”? That is the confident assurance of the person whose focus is on God alone. That is our conclusion when we are convinced that only God is our rock, salvation, and fortress.

This affirmation might cause us to wonder, “Why do we need a rock?” or “When do we need salvation?” We sense our need for security when everything that we placed our hope in or everyone in whom we have trusted have disappeared or disappointed. We need the “Rock” when friends forsake us. We need the fortress when enemies mock us or falsely accuse us. But most important, we need the Savior who gives salvation because we are guilty of offending our Creator.

It would appear that most people in America are prone to fall apart before they ever reach the truly difficult tests. The American dream is to live in perfect peace and quiet, with no troubles, no disruptions of my plans. “Just let me be happy,” is the new mantra, the new American dream. There is now a generation that is completely clueless about the pain, sorrow, agony, and emotional and financial sacrifice foregoing generations paid in order to provide this idyllic rose garden called America. In recent months, we have all witnessed the emotional trauma, the near disasters, experienced by people who didn’t get their way.

God loves to bring such disruptions into the lives of His people in order to help us focus on Him, which is the best dream. The best response, when it becomes obvious that we need a rock on which to stand because all of life has turned to quicksand, is to conclude with David, *My soul waits silently for God.*

Conversely, a common response in a crisis is to find someone to blame. In her new book “What Happened,” presidential candidate Hillary Clinton attempts to explain how she lost the election of 2016, an election she was predicted to win. Apparently, she blames anyone and everyone except herself for her defeat.

If we are not trying to find someone to blame for life’s trials, we at least want to ask questions. We want to know if our nation actually is in danger of be nuked. We want to know if Islamic terrorists are planning another 9-11. We want to know when the stock market is going to crash and how badly it will crash. We want to know if our kids are going to turn out alright. We want to know if our job is secure until we retire.

So who do we ask these important questions? Siri, Google Assistant, Alexa, Cortana are among some of the most popular sources of information when we just need to know. Or we can always Google our questions. Or if you are Snoopy, you consult your “beagle board.” In an Artificial Intelligence world, waiting on God is hard to do. In contrast to normal, expected responses of my world, I am responsible to see that my soul waits silently for God to answer, lead, direct. I can be silent only if I really trust God’s existence. I can be silent only if I trust God’s concern for me. I can be silent when I am resting in the Holy Spirit’s ministry. I can wait silently when I know God’s promises. I can wait for God when I know Him intimately through His Word.

Picture the person overwhelmed by anxiety because of a crisis that has overtaken him or her. The situation is out of control. The victim is frantic, maybe running around aimlessly, crying out to no one in particular, repeating, “What am I going to do? What am I going to do?” Now picture God with His finger to His lips saying, “Shhhhh. I have everything under control.”

It is good for us to conclude the reality with David that God is our hope and salvation. But we must not only think it or speak it. We must act according to reality. *For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God (vv.5-7).* As in most languages, in the English language verbs reveal our actions. The verbal sense of many words in our text are made clear in the English translations.

David acted like this: *O my soul wait in silence (v.5).* The word wait is an imperative. David commanded his soul to wait. It means that we must take control of our spirits. God commands us to do this and gives us the strength and ability through the Holy Spirit’s

ministry. It is as David wrote in another psalm, “*Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!*” (Psalm 46:10). And so the Lord’s rebuke of the disciples who panicked in the storm on the Sea of Galilee. *And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”* (Mark 4:39-40). Don’t just think about waiting on the Lord. Wait on Him!

Second, David lived out the reality, *My hope is from Him* (v.5). We know from other Scripture and our experience that our hope is IN the Lord. However, notice in this statement that our hope is in the Lord because our hope is FROM the Lord. When we trust God, He gives us hope that people who are not God’s children cannot have. Hope is from God because His promises offer hope. Act like God keeps His promise to you by giving you hope.

Third, David lived out the fact that *He is my rock, salvation, fortress* (v.6). All three of these words speak of security. While the storms of circumstances rage about us, in our souls we are secure, standing on the rock Christ Jesus.

Fourth, *I shall not be shaken* (v.6). The verb means to totter, be moved, or fall. The trappings of life may very well tremble and even disappear like a rotten fence or tottering wall (v.3). But my soul stands steadfastly on God’s eternal character and promises.

Fifth, David lived like, *On God rests my salvation* (v.7). My eternal salvation is not a matter of my control or accomplishments. So my temporal salvation is fully in the will of God.

We act according to who and what we know God is. Do I live like God is my hope, my rock and fortress, my salvation, my refuge? How do we know He is this kind of security and more? God reveals His person and character in the Bible. God reveals His traits through experience in circumstances. Our great encouragement comes from learning the truth about God from the Bible and then observing God’s hand moving in life in perfect accord with the truth we learned in the Bible. God’s Word and promises offer great hope. But still we, like David, have great concern.

Concern.

Our concern is that there are those who persecute the person who trusts in God. David asked about them, *How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence? They only plan to thrust him down from his high position* (vv.3-4a).

God’s children must come to grips with the reality that the enemy must attack. Because spirits and people are enemies of the truth, they must attack truth-bearers, truth-believers. It is not a question of if Satan, his minions, and his people will attack God’s children. That is a given. The only question is when, how, how often, and who the instrument of attack will be.

The gospel always has been and always will be a cause of offense in this world. If we speak the gospel, the enemies of truth will seek to silence us. If we live the gospel, the enemies of truth might attempt to put us away, out of sight. Or, if we are living the gospel, the enemies of the truth might attempt to muddy the waters of truth by pretending that they and we are just alike.

The plan of the enemy is to knock down the high one. God’s people are not high because we are wiser, stronger, or better organized. We are in a high position because of God’s work in our behalf. All of God’s children are exalted as members of God’s family. Some of God’s children have actually achieved high standing in culture because of God’s will (Abraham, David, Esther, Nehemiah). But in reality, we are comparatively leaning walls and tottering fences. Apart from God’s help as our fortress, we will fall over at the enemy’s first blow.

Another reality is that the persecutors take pleasure in falsehood. In modern vernacular, “They enjoy fake news.” David said, *They take pleasure in falsehood*. Those who hate the truth must of necessity love and embrace falsehood. If people embrace falsehood regarding God, they are likely to take pleasure in falsehood across the board. That is why sinful people living in a sinful world are so easily duped by false religious leaders. People who take pleasure in falsehood will find it easy to serve manmade gods who share their sinful characteristics.

Anthony Levandowski, a former executive with Google, has filed papers with the IRS to have his church called, “The Way of the

Future,” recognized as a bonafide religious organization. Levandowski has concluded that artificial intelligence should be recognized as a god because it is smarter than the humans who invented it. “It's not a god in the sense that it makes lightning or causes hurricanes. But if there is something a billion times smarter than the smartest human, what else are you going to call it?” The paperwork filed with the IRS states, among other reasons for the creation of the church, that the church will try to “develop and promote the realization of a Godhead based on artificial intelligence and through understanding and worship of the Godhead, contribute to the betterment of society.” In contrast to established churches, Levandowski says his AI God is tangible. “This time you will be able to talk to God, literally, and know that it’s listening” (www.CBNnews/2017/November). So is it possible that the beast and the false prophet described in Revelation 13 are actually robots? By way of reminder, some of the most basic forms of Artificial Intelligence are the gadgets that answer your questions like, Siri, Google Assistant, Alexa, Cortana.

People who embrace falsehood will often be hypocrites. David described them as people who *blest with their mouths, but inwardly they curse (v.4b)*. The hypocrite is more dangerous than the bold enemy. The hypocrite has a pernicious plan in his dark soul, but outwardly appear to be an agreeable friend. Hitler was less dangerous to the Jews than Antichrist will be, because Hitler obviously hated God’s chosen people. Which is more dangerous, radical Islam or liberal Christianity? Islam boldly replaces Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Bible with the result that all its adherents will be in hell for eternity. Liberal Christianity claims to honor Jesus and the Holy Spirit and teach the Bible, but all its adherents will end up in hell thinking they were on the way to the Bible’s heaven. A subtle enemy is much more dangerous than a bold one.

Challenge.

In light of these two realities (God is our secure refuge and the enemy will attack), David challenged God’s children to trust God all the time. Trust is demonstrated by transparency. Here is the challenge: *Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart*

before him; God is a refuge for us (v.8). It is a call for us to trust God in every situation and to demonstrate genuine trust by pouring out your heart to God. There must be no secrets with God.

Trust in God not only causes us to pour out our hearts to Him, but genuine trust rests on God’s words. We are confident that God has spoken. *Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this (v.11a)*. If we really trust God, we know that God speaks in His Word. If He says it twice, we better listen.

What did God tell David in this case? God has taught that He is all powerful. Twice David heard *that power belongs to God (v.11b)*. God can do whatever He chooses to do. He can create, secure, or destroy with a simple word. What will the all-powerful God do for His people? God has taught that He is characterized by steadfast love. . . . *And that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love (v.12a)*. God owns changeless love that is rooted in His covenants and promises. He who promises to secure us will act toward us with covenant love.

God has also taught the divine law of sowing and reaping. *For you will render to a man according to his work (v.12b)*. We know for certain that God will condemn sinners to punishment because of their work against Him. Do we also remember for certain that God will reward His people because – as His people – we work for His glory?

Therefore, because we know these things from God’s Word, as we live in reality trusting God and knowing the enemy will attack, we must be wise and put no trust in passing things or passing people. All people are but a vapor. *Those 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 (v.9)*. People will disappoint. Don’t plan on them offering you security in time of crisis. Second, do not depend on stuff. *Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them (v.10)*. Stuff is also like vapors that pass away quickly.

It is as Isaac Watts concluded, “This vile world is no friend of grace to help us on to God.” Nearly moment by moment throughout the day we are reminded that because Satan is the authority in this sinful, fallen world, there is much untruth and much duplicity. The more authority Satan is able to exercise in a culture, the more persecution God’s people experience.

But, when circumstances become contrary or even ugly, we must confidently rest in God alone. We know that He is our rock, our fortress, our refuge, our salvation and deliverance for life and for eternity. We know these things because we know God. We know that His character makes Him our trustworthy rock, fortress, refuge and salvation. We know His character because He has taught us about Himself in His Word. The more we know God through His Word, the more comfortable we are resting in Him – whether we are facing trouble or not.

So how does your confident assurance in God compare to your trust in passing things? Do you trust your retirement account more than you trust God? Do you trust your doctor more than you trust God? Do you trust your friends and family more than you trust God? Do you trust your employer more than you trust God? Do you trust governing officials more than you trust God? Do you trust your church and its creed more than you trust God? Everything that seeks to rob God of our faith, trust, and full dependance can disappear in seconds through natural disaster, war, or bad judgment. Let the world mock us, reject our message, or even persecute us. They are not ultimately in control. God is!