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A Refuge for the Overwhelmed



Part 11 (050807PM)

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When life unexpectedly overwhelms us and we feel we can't go on and we feel all alone—what do we do? David faced that as well as so many of God's faithful servants through the years. Just because we love and serve the Lord doesn't mean we miss the storms and skids of life.

Open with me to one of the gravest hours in the life of David. [1 Samuel 21:10-15](#).

- [1 Samuel 21:10-15](#) Then David arose and fled that day from before Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. 11 And the servants of Achish said to him, "Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of him to one another in dances, saying: 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands?'" 12 Now David took these words to heart, and was very much afraid of Achish the king of Gath. [***That is the setting for Psalm 56***] 13 So he changed his behavior before them, pretended madness in their hands, scratched on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva fall down on his beard. 14 Then Achish said to his servants, "Look, you see the man is insane. Why have you brought him to me? 15 Have I need of madmen, that you have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?" [***That is the setting for Psalm 34 and then later, Psalm 70***].

David bottoms out emotionally, he is unable to go on because of complete fear, loneliness, and danger. So he puts on an act like he has lost his mind. Not everything David did was right—but the inspired lessons are always right. The key to this time in David's life is found not in the short term events, but in the long term direction of his heart!

Paul spoke most personally of his struggles in 2 Corinthians. Listen to his struggles with unexpected situations that overwhelmed his life.

- [2 Corinthians 1:8](#) For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.
- [2 Corinthians 4:7-10](#) But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

David had found a place he could always reach for safety and security—in any situation. The Lord was his refuge; the Lord is our refuge also. Christ our refuge is the safest spot in the Universe. He is the place we go when life gets tough.

Christ Is Our Lifelong Refuge from Loneliness

We are in the midst of the fourth of these twelve hard times when David was alone. He was alone in a crowd sometimes, alone in a cave, alone with a flock—but never away from the presence of the Lord. His insight by God's grace is the theme of each of these Psalms. That is what God's Word addresses—we see the situation, feel David's loneliness and then see the solution God showed him. All of that is recorded for our use in this wonderful book—the Bible!

David suffers intense loneliness as moves to a new location not by choice, and under duress. In First [Samuel 21:11](#) as he fled from Saul to the Philistine city of Gath, David wrote ***Psalms 56, 34 and 70***—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in a foreign situation.

When we are desperate God is not. When we are alone—God is there. When we are troubled—God is a very present refuge and help for us to flee into His waiting arms.

God loves to be needed, sought, and asked to help. Think of all the times in life you go to places with a struggle in your heart; that is exactly what David felt.

	Unexpected Changes of Life
Part: 9	Refuge for the Loneliness of Life—Job Loss
Part: 8	Refuge for the Loneliness of Life—Family Conflict
Part: 7	Refuge for the Loneliness of Youth
Part: 6	Christ: Refuge for the Weary
Part: 5	Christ: Refuge for the Unclean
Part: 4	Christ: Our Life-Long Refuge
Part: 3	The Safest Place on Earth
Part: 2	Christ: Our City of Refuge
Part: 1	Anchored to Christ

Now what are the details of Psalm 56?

- **David was all alone.** No army (they start joining him according to 1 Samuel 22 after Gath), no family, no friends, nothing.
- **David was desperate.** What type of fear would make someone run away from home and into the hometown of the very person you killed in public, before thousands of witnesses.
- **David was afraid.** He had made a mistake. And now all alone he walks into Gath; he walks in with the accent of a Hebrew from Judea; he walks in holding the only sword in existence that was quite like this one, held by Gath's champion Goliath—and they spotted him, caught him, and now are imprisoning him. Psalm 34 was written after this event; Psalm 56 is during the event.

Next, turn back to **Psalm 34**. What is the back drop for this Psalm? When we compare the details of **1 Sam. 21:13-15** with the record in Psalm 34: v. 13 So he changed his behavior before them, feigned madness in their hands, scratched on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva fall down on his beard. 14 Then Achish said to his servants, "Look, you see the man is insane. Why have you brought him to me? 15 "Have I need of madmen, that you have brought this [fellow] to play the madman in my presence? Shall this [fellow] come into my house?" (NKJV), we can see the exact context of this Psalm. In First **Samuel 22:1** as he fled from Gath and the Philistines, David wrote **Psalm 34**.

Stand with me as we read Psalm 34 and then pray!

Like David We Need to Glorify God in Every Situation

Psalm 34 A Psalm of David when he pretended madness before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed.

Psalm 34:1 I will bless the LORD at all times [**the Lord was his delight**]; His praise [shall] continually [be] in my mouth. 2 My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; The humble shall hear [of it] and be glad.

Psalm 34:3 Oh, magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together. [**he gives glory to God**]

Psalm 34:4 I sought the LORD, [**even in tough times he always sought for God**] and He heard me, And delivered me from all my fears. 5 They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces were not ashamed.

Psalm 34:6 This poor man cried out, [**During tough times he had a proper view of himself; he was poor in spirit as Christ would later say.**] and the LORD heard [him,] And saved him out of all his troubles. 7 The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.

- When we are weak and admit it—God can help us. If we stay like the Laodiceans and say to our selves that we are in "need of nothing" God won't help us.
- Remember in Genesis 32 how Jacob wanted God's blessing? What did God do before He would bless him? Jacob had to be broken. God will never bless the flesh; God never blesses the proud who are confident in their own abilities, caught up in their own plans and schemes.
- Jacob wants to use God just like he used his brother Esau to get what he wanted; just like he used his father Isaac to get what he wanted; just like he used his father in law Laban to get what he wanted—now Jacob wants to use God to get what he wanted.
- God will not be used. God will not bless the schemes of the proud and their confidence of their abilities. God will break us instead. And that is what He did to Jacob. He crippled him until all Jacob could do is hold on to God. And like David say, "This poor man cried...." There is no limit to what God can do with a needy person who cries out to Him.
- What does James tell us? **James 4:10** Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Psalm 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD [is] good; [**He had a personal experience of God**] Blessed [is] the man [who] trusts in Him!

Psalm 34:9 Oh, fear the LORD, [**During tough times he practiced the presence of God, acknowledging Him is to fear him. it changed his behavior. If we believe right we will behave right!**] you His saints! [There is] no want to those who fear Him. 10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good [thing.] 11 Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. 12 Who [is] the man [who] desires life, And loves [many] days, that he may see good? 13 Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit. 14 Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.

Psalm 34:15 The eyes of the LORD [are] on the righteous, [**During tough times he knew he was in touch with God**] And His ears [are open] to their cry. 16 The face of the LORD [is] against those who do evil, To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. 17 [The righteous] cry out, and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles. 18 The LORD [is] near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit. 19 Many [are] the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all. 20 He guards all his bones; Not one of them is broken. 21 Evil shall slay the wicked, And those who hate the righteous shall be condemned.

Psalm 34:22 The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned. [**During tough times the cross is the ultimate refuge**] (NKJV)

David turned, trusted, and triumphed—that is his pattern. Whether it was the family conflicts and dangers that left him all alone, or this job loss—he always turned to God, trusts in His promises, and is led in triumph. That kind of echoes a New Testament verse we all know doesn't it?

2 Corinthians 2:14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.

Are you a fragrance at the unemployment office for Christ or not for Christ? Can people tell you are turning to God or to despair? Can your wife see you are trusting God or panicking? Does God see you being led in triumph or sinking in pity? Remember we can't change most of our circumstances—but we can change our attitude in them!

What happens when we don't have the Lord to turn to? A classic example is found in the life of one of the most well known hymn writers of the 19th century. Orphaned at 6 by the death of his mother, William Cowper was from a grand British family. His grand uncle was the prime minister of Britain in its greatest hour, his family was well off. But sent to boarding school and being small, young, and weak—William was mercilessly hounded and preyed upon by older boys. Bullied to the point of depression, William grew up in the shadows of life. In his youth he attempted to hang himself, failed, and then lost his mind over the guilt of thinking he had committed the unpardonable sin. After years in the insane asylum he came to Christ in 1764 at the age of 33. Soon he was taken in by John Newton. They became life long best of friends. William struggled to his last day with crippling depression, but that never stopped him from writing hymns. You know his best one. It is page #196, "There Is A Fountain Filled With Blood."

David could have been overcome with fear and grief and despair—but God held him up. In latter life David looked back on these times and wrote another Psalm, lets turn there next.

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