

O Lord, our God and our Father
in heaven. You're our refuge, our strength,
our help in tight places, always close at hand. The Lord of hosts
is with us. The God of Jacob is our stronghold. This evening, fathers, we come
to your word. We pray you will teach us to
trust you even in dark and deceitful times when men are treacherous. Help us to
resort to the God
who is faithful all day and every day, whose mercies are new every
morning, and whose compassions, whose tender, loving kindnesses
never cease or come to an end. We offer these prayers in Jesus'
name, amen. Please take your seats. If you
would, turn with me and your copy of the Word of God to the
Psalter again and Psalm number seven. The word of God open. Listen
carefully. This is the word of the everlasting
and the ever living God. Take heed how you hear. A Shegion of David which he sang
to the Lord concerning the words of Cush a Benjaminite. Oh Lord
my God, in you do I take refuge. Save me from all my pursuers. and deliver me. Lest,
like a
lion, they tear my soul apart, rending it in pieces with none
to deliver. O Lord, my God, if I have done
this, if there is wrong in my hands, if I have repaid my friend
with evil, or plundered my enemy without cause, let the enemy
pursue my soul and overtake it, and let him trample my life to
the ground and lay my glory in the dust, Selah. Arise, O Lord,
in your anger. Lift yourself up against the
fury of my enemies. Awake from me. You've appointed
judgment. Let the assembly of the peoples
be gathered about you. Over it, return on high. The
Lord judges the peoples. Judge me, O Lord, according to
my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me. O let the evil of the
wicked
come to an end, and may you establish the righteous, you who test the
minds and hearts, O righteous God. My shield is with God, who
saves the upright in heart. God is our righteous judge and
a God who feels indignation every day. If man does not Repent,
God will wet his sword. He has bent and readied his bow.
He has prepared for him his deadly weapons, making his arrows fiery
shafts. Behold, the wicked man conceives
evil and is pregnant with mischief and gives birth to lies. He makes
a pit, digging it out and falls into the hole that he has made.
His mischief returns upon his own head and on his own skull,
his violence descends. I will give to the Lord the thanks
due to his righteousness, and I will sing praises to the name
of the Lord the Most High. Amen. The grass withers, and
the flower falls off, but this is the word of God, and it endures
forever. Amen. May God add his blessing
to its reading and preaching this evening. Well, sticks and
stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me. said
he who had never once endured the pain of slander. When I was a young doctor,
actually

my first post as a pediatrician, I was on call in one of the first rotations in my, what you would call, residency. And this young boy came in with diabetic ketoacidosis. That's a medical emergency in adults, but it's especially so in children. People with diabetic ketoacidosis, and adults, you can reverse the metabolic imbalance. They've got too much acid, too

much sugar in their blood, and that tends to cause a cascade failure. The heart doesn't beat so well when there's too much acid and other problems, and they get very dehydrated. And with adults, though, you can push fluids quickly and give a lot of insulin and get things back to normal pretty quickly. But you can't do that with children. Children are very delicate. They get sick very quickly. And they tend to recover quickly. But with diabetic ketoacidosis, you've got to be very, very slow. It's slow, slow, and less of the quick, quick when it comes to correcting diabetic ketoacidosis. This lad came in, though, but I could tell immediately he was an extremist. He was in real difficulty. And I started the protocol, which was a slow reversal But I called the registrar above me, who was the most senior doctor on call that night, and we'll call her name Janet. But I called her, and she was watching Friends up in the break room. And I told her, I'm really concerned about this lad. He's in trouble. And she goes, Neil, you're panicking. Calm down. It's fine. Just follow the protocol. He'll get better. He didn't get better. I was checking his blood gases and so forth regularly, and they were step by step getting worse, and he wasn't responding to the protocol. So I called her back every 15 minutes and said the same thing. Janet, I'm really concerned about this chap. You better come and see him.

He's getting worse. Neil, you're panicking. Calm down. I'll be down in a while. Well, this went on for about an hour, an hour and a half, and maybe an hour. went on for but I'd kept detailed notes every 15 minutes calling Janet and when she came down to the ward the boy was in real trouble and she saw this and she immediately rushed him to intensive care and as she was doing that she slandered me to all the nurses and told them that I had not told her how severely sick he was and that I had underestimated the condition I was experiencing junior doctor after all, and she just went to town. And the nurses I could see were believing her. They were looking at me with daggers. And I was seeing my medical career flash before my eyes, not to mention this young boy who was, at this point, rapidly, his brain was beginning to swell, and he was in trouble. And they were intubating him in ICU, and I was standing there, helter-skelter, painful. What do you do in those kind of moments? when it seems as if everyone's against you, nobody believes you, and the wicked are slandering you. Well, Psalm 7 gives us a place to turn. It's a shigion. We don't quite know what that means. Most scholars think it refers

to a musical term of direction. Alec Mateer connects it to an ancient Hebrew word for cover. And it's kind of, in his mind, like one of those emergency buttons. When in trouble, pull this kind of thing. When in trouble, turn to this psalm. The context is a little obtuse. We don't know exactly the historical background. But the ESV, actually, I often criticize the ESV, and by and large, when the ESV and the New American Standard differ, the New American Standard is often right. But in this case, the New American Standard completely messes up this opening title, which David, which he sang to the Lord concerning the words of Cush, the New American Standard leaves out the words, but they're there in the Hebrew, concerning the words of Cush, Benjaminite. Calvin calls this the Song of the Slandered Servant. And it's slander coming from within the covenant community. Benjamin, of course, is one of the tribes of Israel, and it's the tribe from which Saul came. And so while we don't know the precise historical background of this psalm, it's not hard to put the pieces together. You remember when David was running from Saul, there was that brief interlude when he kind of hid with the Philistines and even fought with the Philistines, although he was conducting special forces raids behind enemy lines and taking out enemy villages. But the Philistines didn't know that. And David almost, you remember, had to fight in the battle in which Saul and Jonathan were killed. And God semi-miraculously delivered him out of that battle and he didn't have to fight in it. But it's not hard to see that the Saulites, the clan of Saul, the Benjaminites probably always thought that David had a hand in Saul's death and maybe David was the one he thrust Saul through with the sword and so forth in that battle. And so Cush, this leader in the Benjaminite tribe, is spreading slander about David, and David's pretty stressed about it. He tells us he's concerned that they would, like a lion, tear his soul apart. David's seen lions tear sheep apart, limb from limb. And David feels that these bestial men are out to get him, and they're not just slandering him. This slander is going viral, perhaps, in the community, and David is really concerned for his life. There might be a coup d'etat. He'd be rent in pieces with none to deliver. So it's not hard to see how David was left feeling profoundly vulnerable and insecure from this rippling slander. Have you ever felt, have you ever been in that kind of a situation? People are slandering you, maligning your good name. It's a terrible pain. Even when it's righted in time, there's always a stain left. There's a story about an Indian wise man who was slandered by one of his disciples. And the disciple came back and said to him, will you forgive me? He said, I'll forgive you on two conditions. And the disciple said, sure, anything. He said, I want you to drive through the village with a feather pillow in your hand. As you're driving through the

village, I want you to cut open the pillow. and just keep driving. When you do that, come back,

I'll tell you condition number two. No problem, he said. So the guy jumps in the car, gets his pillow, drives through the car, holds his pillow through the sunroof, tears open the pillow, and drives through the town, and then comes back to the wise man and said, I've done condition number one. What's condition number two?

And the wise man says, go back and tick up all the feathers. It's kind of hard, isn't it? And slanders like that has a way of insinuating itself into the minds and hearts of men and forever changing the way they view you, the way they think of you. And it's very, very painful. It's much worse, one of the old commentators said, much easier to be attacked by a sword than a tongue. Tongues leave a mark that often time will not erase. So what do you do in such situations?

David says, first of all, remember God. And that's really the main point. Remember God, David says. Remember God. He is your God. You belong to him. And as such,

you can always turn to him whatever your trouble. Notice what David says. Oh Lord, my God, in you do I take refuge. Save me from all my pursuers and deliver me. Verse three, oh Lord, oh Jehovah, my God, if I have done this, if there's wrong in my hands and so forth and so on. But David turns to Yahweh, the great God of heaven, the one before whom, before the mountains were born or ever he give birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting. He was the being one, the existing one, and he belongs to David. He is mine, David says, and I am his. And that's a tremendous thing that we can say. And children this evening, if you're still here, any of you in the service, young people, that's something that as a covenant child, you can say God has promised to your dad and to your mom, I will be God to you and to your children after you. As you grow in your tender years, God belongs to you and you belong to God and you can call God my God. That's a privilege that does

not belong to those outside of the church. Once they put their trust in God, they can call him my God, but until that moment, they can't. They don't belong to him, and he doesn't belong to them, but he does belong to you, and that is a very, very, very great privilege. God legally belongs to you. Oh Lord, my God, David says, in you do I take refuge. Notice David takes refuge in God by song and by prayer. Calvin calls the Psalms sung prayers. And the great lesson here is

that sometimes you have to pray and sing your way to comfort. It'll not come any other way. And that's not normally what you do. If you're like me and you're being slandered, our instinct is to go and try to right the wrong, to slander the person slandering us, to get our side of the story out there, to right our wrongs and to justify ourselves. But David doesn't take refuge in himself, he takes refuge in his God by prayer and by song. And this is the grand

lesson,
not just of this song, but of the whole Psalter, that we should use every occasion in life, the good, the bad, and the ugly, as an opportunity to practice our devotion for and our trust in God. What I'm saying is you should respond to life theologically. By that I mean you've got to learn the discipline of taking what you know about God and to apply that to your circumstances. That'll not be your natural response. We normally go the opposite direction, don't we? We take what we're experiencing and we then take our experiences and try to build and extract our theology from our experience, from our feeling, and that is the worst way to go. It'll leave you saying, all these things are against me. And we go the other way. We take what we know about God and we apply that to our circumstances. And we see in this psalm this evening, David using his doctrine of God to navigate the difficult and dangerous waters of human slander and injustice. Calvin says, this is a genuine and an undoubted proof of our faith. When being visited with adversity, we, notwithstanding, persevere in cherishing and exercising hope in God. We hold on to God like a terrier with a tug toy. We will not let it go. Which can be very annoying in a dog. Drop, no, he holds on to it. It'd be annoying, but it's wonderful with a soul and God. I will not let you go, Jacob said, until you bless me. That's the first thing then, remember God, he is your God, you belong to him, and as such you can always turn to him in prayer, he's mine. Later on he says, my shield is with God, which means, I think what David is saying there is I'm not holding my shield, all these arrows are coming at me from all directions, but God is the one, like Captain America with the shield. And he's on it like white and rice. Every arrow is absorbed by the shield, and they don't get through to me because I'm not the one holding the shield. I'm not the one defending myself. God is doing that for me, and he does a jolly better job of doing it for you than you will do it for yourself. He is your God. You belong to him, and as such, you can always turn to him in prayer. Second thing, remember God. He knows who is right and who is wrong. He knows the details of your case and he knows the depths of your heart. He knows the details of your case. Verse three and four, oh Lord, my God, if I have done this, if there is wrong in my hands, if I have repaid my friend with evil or plundered my enemy without cause. Lord, you know the truth. David says, you know, Lord, when I was with Saul, I tried to help him. I sang music to him. Even when he attacked me, I dodged, but I didn't attack him back. And even that time in this cave when I cut off the edge of his garment, my heart struck me that I cut off the edge of his garment. And I ran out and confessed my sin to him and to you. You know, Lord, I would never lift my hand against your anointed David here is not pleading that he sin less. He's just saying, I have not

sinned in this way against this particular person. Lord, you know what's going on. You know the truth. It's not the great fear you have when you're being slandered. Nobody knows the truth, and everyone believes the lie. And if you only think about men, that'll overwhelm you. But if you remember that God knows the truth, it gives tremendous comfort. God knows. That should give great comfort to the innocent, and should strike terror into the hearts of those who are unjustly our foes. Even in the church. He knows the details of your case. He also knows the depths of your heart. Verse nine and 10. Oh, let the evil of the wicked come to an end, and may you establish the righteous. You who test the minds and hearts, oh righteous God. My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart. It's one of the most painful trials when people question your motives, right? Don't ever do that, by the way. We do it all the time, especially with our spouses. I know what you really meant in that comment. And they go, no, I didn't. I really didn't mean that. But we know better, right? Because we have the eye of God, and we know what's going on in their heart. No, you don't. You can never know someone's motives. We should take very great care. When we say we do, what we're saying is I know as well as God what was going on in your heart. There's only one who tests the hearts and minds of men and gives to every man according to their deeds. Remember when Paul, if you turn quickly in your Bibles to 1 Thessalonians 2, remember when Paul was in Thessalonica, he was only there for three Sabbaths, so maybe two full weeks or even maybe into a third week, but he was there for a very short time, and then because of the attacks of the Jews, Paul had to flee. He flees to Berea, where the Jews were more reasonable, and when he's there, he writes back to the Thessalonians, and already the Jews were slandering Paul. They were saying, Paul doesn't care about you. That's why he left. Easy for Paul. He can run away, but you've got to stay here and face our wrath. Paul isn't really concerned about you. Paul doesn't love you. Paul's really in it for himself, or maybe he's in it for the money. How did Paul respond to those claims? Well, look at the opening verses. He says to them, for you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. But after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. Paul says, I came from Philippi, where I was beaten half to death, and I came to Thessalonica, where the same thing was essentially promised me. And I still preach the gospel with boldness. Those are not the actions of a man who is self-centered. There's easier ways for me to make a living, Paul's saying. Then he says, for our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit, but just

as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts, Paul says. God knows my heart. And then he goes on, for we never came with flattering speech, as you know. You can know that, Thessalonians. You can know when I preach, I didn't flatter you, I didn't tickle your ears, didn't tell you how wonderful you are to try and get you on my side. Got nationwide for that, I'm joking. But you can tell, I didn't flatter you. Then he goes on, nor did I come with a pretext for greed. Well, how can you, we can't know your heart. How do we know? He didn't come with a pretext for greed. What does Paul say? God is witness. He appeals to God. God knows my heart. Nor do we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ, we might have literally thrown our weight around. But Paul appeals to God. He's like Jesus when he was slandered. He did not threaten. Nor did he revile in return, but committed himself to God, who judges righteously." 1 Peter 2, end of the chapter. So he knows the depths of your heart and theirs, and he knows the details of your case. God knows who is right and who is wrong. Thirdly, remember God. God doesn't just know what's right and what's wrong. God cares about what's right and what's wrong, deeply and passionately. Verse six. Arise, O Lord, in your anger. Lift yourself up against the fury of my enemies. Awake from me. You've appointed a judgment. God is our righteous judge, verse 11, and God who feels indignation every day. Now, we've got to be careful, right? We're told in our confession that God is no body, parts, or passions. What that means is God doesn't have an emotional life the way you and I have an emotional life. His emotions don't rise and fall, though at times he reveals himself that way, just like he comes down, but he fills all space, right? So he reveals himself that way. God is beyond time. It's not just that God has no beginning and no end. He doesn't know anything of a ticking clock. He inhabits eternity. And in eternity, God enjoys, God is in full possession of his glory at all moments. He's infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His glory, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, in His love, in His wrath. He's a roaring conflagration of holy happiness. But when you bring sin into the holy blessedness of God, what sin and sinners experience is rough. The holiness of God destroys them. But God's not a, he's not walking about in heaven in a bad mood, right? And yet, so God is without body, parts, or passions. He's not the victim of circumstances. We don't ruin his day. Things don't happen to God, and then God doesn't respond emotionally. He doesn't emote. And yet God reveals himself as a God who is angry, furious with the wicked every day. And those words don't mean nothing. They're God's words. They're God's self-revelation

of himself. As God reaches from eternity and the immutability of his glory, and he reaches into time with human words, which are always going to be inadequate. Calvin calls them an *accomodatio*, an accommodation, baby language, the prattling of a mother to her baby. We couldn't understand the fullness of God's glory, so He prattles to us like a mother cooing and eyeing to her child. And yet, when God reaches across eternity with words, those words mean something not just to us, but also to Him. He's accommodating Himself to us. He's not deceiving us. Had an argument once with a fairly well-known theologian, a young guy, who was saying, God isn't really angry. And I'm just like, but he reveals he's angry. And he said, but he's not really angry. I'm thinking, well. You know, the Holy Spirit, when people trample him underfoot to get away from Christ, or they trample Christ underfoot, the Bible says we outrage the Spirit of grace. But he's not really angry. I said, but he uses the word outrage to describe himself. I said, okay, let me just say this. When you're dealing with the most powerful force in existence, whatever he means by outrage, outrage is the last thing you want to do, produce in him when you defy his son and trample him under your foot, under your feet. The psalm here, God is a righteous judge and he feels indignation every way. Derek Kidner says, God himself is far from lukewarm on the matter. God doesn't judge justice with the passion of a vegan describing the glory of a medium rare filet mignon. He's energetically opposed to it with all of his being. God himself is far from lukewarm on the matter of justice. Indeed, his indignation every day is more constant than any human zeal, having no tendency to cool down into either compromise or despair. I wish I could write a sentence like Derek Kidner. is more constant than any human zeal, having no tendency to cool down into either compromise or despair. Sharnack, the old Puritan, said, God may be reconciled to the sinner, but never to their sin. Matthew Henry says, as his mercies are new every morning toward his people, so his anger is new every morning against the wicked. God looks down from heaven. He knows who you are. He knows the details of your situation. And he knows the depths of your heart. And God is not lukewarm, *laissez faire*, unconcerned for you. You can wrap your soul around such a God in moments when men betray you and when men attack you and when men slander you. God cares about what's right and what's wrong. And then thirdly, God takes action for the righteous against the wicked. Remember, God is a wonderful way of taking action to protect His people until Judgment Day. Verse 9, O let the evil of the wicked come And let's go back to verse 8. The Lord judges the peoples. Judge me, O Lord. If he judges the peoples, I can

trust him to judge me. If he's the judge of all the earth, I can trust him to take judgment of me, O Lord, according to my righteousness. That's in this particular matter. Or if you want to go further,

we sing the Psalms best in Christ. When you say, Lord, judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and you go gulp. Your elder brother, Jesus, stands beside you. It's okay, I sang that bit with you. I'm your elder brother. Your righteousness is my righteousness by the same logic as your sin became mine. And when you say, judge me, Lord, according to my righteousness, you're saying, judge me according to my righteousness in Christ. And you're on a winning argument when you say that. And according to the integrity that's in me, as I am in him, his integrity. O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, and may you establish the righteous, you who test the minds and hearts, O righteous God. My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart. God is on your side, all of his being is holding that shield, protecting you, preserving you. God has a wonderful way of protecting his people until Judgment Day, and God has a wonderful way of bringing the wicked to Judgment Day. Verse 11, God is a righteous judge and a God who feels indignation every day. If a man does not repent, God will wet his sword. He has bent and readied his bow. He has prepared for him his deadly weapons, making his arrows fiery shafts. In the military, when it comes to using weapons, there are two great commands. There's weapons hold. which means that you're not free to fire, you're not free to engage the enemy. You have to abide by the rules of engagement and you're not free to engage unless you're attacked first, weapons hold. The other great command is weapons free. And when soldiers are given that command, they're free to engage any and every enemy that presents itself before their field of fire. And David says, God looks down from heaven and his weapons are free. They're ready. The arrow is bent upon the, the arrow's on the string and blazing, and the string is bent, and it's not like one of those fancy compound bows that you deer hunters use when you get to a certain bed, ding, and you can just hold it back forever. This is a bow, I don't know, that's maybe 70 pounds in draw strength, and you have it back, your hands shaking, and it takes effort to hold the arrow and the string. And God is likening himself with the wicked in his sight and the arrows on the string blazing and pointed at the target. I'm not pointing at you, by the way, sorry. But that should give the wicked some pause. If you're, and I'm not aware of any of this going on in this church, but if you're involved in church politics and you're behind the scenes kind of slandering and maligning and Machiavellian politics, this should give you pause. This is how God feels about, not just the Philistines, but this guy Cush who's attacking

David, who's a picture of Christ. If you attack the faithful in the church in order to get your way, you're really attacking Christ and his kingdom. and you're threatening the church. And God has said in the New Testament, if any man destroys the church, I will destroy him. Morrison, who's an old commentator, heretofore unknown to me, that William Plummer coached a lot in his studies in the Book of Psalms, which is amazing. You can get it in the Banner series of commentaries. The figure which represents Jehovah as having bent his bow and made it ready is awfully descriptive of the exposed situation of every sinner until he returns to the shepherd and bishop of souls. The whole system of nature and providence is ready at the bidding of the Almighty to inflict the blow that shall hurl him to perdition. The archer of divine vengeance stands, as it were, with bended bow, and the next arrow that he discharges may pierce with everlasting anguish the soul that now glides on securely in the career of thoughtlessness and crime. Or Spurgeon says ever memorably, sinners may have many feast days, but no safe days. Whenever you're here this evening, you're not yet a Christian, you're visiting this church, you're trying to figure out what's going on in Christianity. And you heard this morning that God says, unless you're born again, you can't see, you can't enter the kingdom of heaven. The same God who said that also said, seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he's near, which kind of implies that there's a time when God is near, and there's a time when he draws away from us. There's a time when he's more findable than others, and maybe this is one of those near times when God is drawing near to your soul, and he's saying to you, seek me and live. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart, or the next thing through it might be one of God's arrows calling you to perdition. Behold, the wicked man conceives evil and is pregnant with mischief and gives birth to lies. He makes a pit, digging it out and falls into the hole that he has made. Verse 16, as mischief returns upon his own head and on his own skull, his violence descends. It's a beautiful picture of the boomerang effects of sin, that very often God needs to do nothing but hold back and let the wicked destroy themselves. Plummer again says, this time himself, the work of destroying the wicked will not require any special preparation. Every sinner on earth is continually ready to drop into hell. So those are, in such moments, let's bring this to a conclusion, shall we? In such moments when you're being slandered and attacked unfairly and unjustly, you have three great insecurities. The first is nobody sees. And God says, I see. Your second insecurity is nobody cares. And God says, oh, I care. And your third insecurity is no one's going to do anything. And God says, you couldn't be more wrong. It's like that scene in The Patriot. Remember whenever that wicked, the Cavendish, the wicked English officer who's been butchering Mel Gibson's character's family. Mel Gibson says to him,

essentially,
we will meet again. And Cavendish says, when? And Mel Gibson says, oh, soon, very soon. And you can trust a God who says soon and very soon. You will see the King, and the wicked will also, and he will take action. and sometimes in the most delightful way. So back to Janet, almost said her real name there. So I'm standing in pediatric ICU, my medical career is flashing before my eyes, and the life of this lad that she'd neglected. And... I'm beside, I didn't even know my name, I'm beside myself. Nurses running around everywhere, giving me death stares, grabbing intubation equipment and everything else, and it's all chaos. And suddenly into ICU, walks, this is the middle of the night, this is like 10.30 in the evening, Dr. Carson. Dr. Carson was the most senior metabolic physician in pediatrics in Northern Ireland. He wasn't even on call that night. He was on the way back from the theater watching a play, and he wanted some coffee, and Starbucks was closed. And so he knew there's always coffee on the go in pediatric ICU, so he stops by pediatric ICU accidentally to pick up some coffee and walks into this chaos. And he says, Neil, what's going on? And I said, so come into my office. So he pulls me into the office in ICU. And I'd pull out the notes where I'd documented every 15 minutes, called Dr. Janet and said, this, this, this, this, this. I'm very concerned. She said, I'm panicking. And this went on and goes, leave that to me. And I was delivered for a season.

Well, fast forward a few years, it gets better. I'm now working in the hospital in Donald. I'm one step up the food chain, but so is Dr. Janet. And it's my first big kind of job as what you would call a senior resident, but she was more senior still. And we come in, and on the first ward round, she pulls me aside and says to me, just so you know, I'm watching you. I'm going to go through every case you deal with, every decision you make, and you are going to make a mistake. And when you do, I'm going to destroy you. So I'd walk into the break room and she'd be talking to the other doctors and the conversation would stop and everybody would look at me, awkward silence. And I'm kind of, oh no. So I'm thinking, and this was a new hospital for me, I'd never worked there in pediatrics, didn't know really anyone there at all. And so I decide, I pick one of the senior consultants, the senior attending physicians, a guy from Canada, and I went to speak to him. As it happened, he was a born again Christian. And he said to me, Neil, just keep your nose clean and trust God. She's slandering you, don't slander her. Just keep your nose clean and trust God. So I did that, and I went on for several weeks and months, and things got worse and worse and worse, and it was awful. I knew I was being slandered everywhere I went. Well, one day I was taking some labs down to the lab. The

porters were slow in those days. We didn't have the gushy thing, NHS. And so I'm running down, and there was a disused ward. And several floors in this hospital were empty of beds because cutbacks in the NHS. And so I'm running through this deserted ward to get to the labs, to find the hospital. And Dr. Janet corners me and backs me into this office door, and I'm standing at this office door, and she's cursing me out and telling me what a terrible doctor I am, and I'm just, the blood's draining from my eyes, how everybody hates me, and it's all gonna end badly, and she's got me, and everything else. And I'm going, and then suddenly, the door behind me opens. Now remember, this is a deserted ward, there's no beds there, no staff there, it's totally lights out, dead. The door opens. And Dr. Bell is standing there, who was the most senior pediatrician in that hospital. And I could see, I didn't know who it was, I just heard the door open, and I saw the blood drain from Janet's face. And Dr. Bell went to Janet. And Janet walks into the room. I couldn't hear the words, but I could hear the tune. It was loud and angry. And after that, the door opened, and Janet left with her head between her legs and walked off. And Dr. Bell called me in and said, listen, If you two don't stop fighting, one of you is going to be looking for a new job, and it's not going to be you. And I said, is that a promise? But I mean, who would have thought? It's vintage Yahweh, as Dr. Davis would say. I'm on a totally deserted part of the hospital. There's nobody there but me and Janet. And Dr. Bell, behind the very door that we were arguing against, she found a wee quiet place, a corner in the hospital where she could catch up on her dictation. And suddenly she was there at the right time and the right place to deliver God's beleaguered child. And that doesn't happen all the time. But it happens just enough to know that there's one in heaven who sees and who knows. and who cares, and you can trust Him, whatever you face in life, it is never a vain thing to call upon the Lord and to seek Him. If the whole world is against you, but you stand with God, He is for you, and He will not abandon you or let you be destroyed in the hands of the wicked, even when they think they've got you. Let's pray together. Father in heaven, we thank you

for the Psalter, this beautiful little hymn book in the middle of the Bible. You've given us all these songs to sing our way and pray our way through trouble to God. And we see other men in the past who stood where we stand, who faced evil that we face, but they faced it by facing you, and you were true to them. And you helped them, and you did not abandon them. And we pray, O Lord, for your people gathered here this evening. For some of the people here, O Lord, this is not an imagination. This is reality. This is where they stand right now. And we pray you would be to them what you were for David, a refuge in strength

and a help in tight places, always close at hand. In Christ our Savior's name we pray. Amen.