

“Our Song in the Midst of Trouble”
Psalm 59
(Preached at Trinity, February 20, 2011)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we’ve journeyed through the psalms of the Second Book of the Psalter one of the first things we notice is a similar pattern. Most of them deal with David coming under the assault of his enemies and his crying out to God for deliverance.
The opening line has become familiar:
Psalm 59:1 – “Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God”
Although they are similar in subject matter we’ve also found that each one has certain distinct qualities that make it unique.
2. As we begin **Psalm 59** we find a familiar pattern in the opening superscription. Several psalms in the Second Book of the Psalter share this opening.
 - A. It was prepared by David and given to the chief musician. David attaches to it the notation: *Altaschith* - Literally it means, “do not destroy.” This is the third of four psalms with this designation. It could be a command to preserve this psalm – “Do not destroy it.” Or it could refer to David’s plea that God not utterly destroy the heathen—as with the other psalms with this superscription this would seem inconsistent with the tone of the psalm:
Verse 13 – “Consume *them* in wrath, consume *them*, that they *may not be*”
Or it could simply be the particular tune that was to accompany the psalm.
 - B. This psalm is also called a *Michtam* of David. As we’ve seen, there are six psalms with this designation. No one knows for certain the meaning of this word. Some believe it comes from a word that expresses something hidden.
These psalms contain hidden truths that only God’s people can know and experience.
3. Psalm 59 is also another of the imprecatory psalms. It seems strange to us that so many of these psalms were used in the context of Israel’s worship. Perhaps they had a better grasp of God’s justice and glory than we do.
Spurgeon – “Out of a sour, ungenerous soil spring up the honey-bearing flowers of Psalmody.”
4. The context for this psalm is also provided in the superscription:
Psalm 59:1 – “when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.”
 - A. This is recorded in **1 Samuel**
1 Samuel 19:11 – “Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal David's wife told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to night, to morrow thou shalt be slain.”

- B. David's deliverance was provided Providentially through his wife, Michal, Saul's daughter.
1 Samuel 19:12-14 – "So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped. ¹³ And Michal took an image, and laid *it* in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' *hair* for his bolster, and covered *it* with a cloth. ¹⁴ And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He *is* sick."
5. We find in **Psalm 59** once again a man facing some of the severe trials of life. We find him crying out to God in faith and confidence and singing with assurance and joy that God will hear and come with deliverance. Such demonstrations of faith give us confidence as we face our own trials.
 I title tonight's sermon, "Our Song in the Midst of Trouble"
6. I'll divide the psalm into three sections:
- I. **Verses 1-5** – David prays for God's deliverance
 - II. **Verses 6-13** – David declares his confidence in God
 - III. **Verses 14-17** – David celebrates God as his great Deliverer
- I. **Verses 1-5** – David prays for God's deliverance
- A. **Verses 1-2** reveal David's cry – "Deliver me"
Psalm 59:1-2 – "Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me. ² Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men."
 1. David was at home and found himself surrounded
 Earlier that evening David had narrowly escaped from Saul with his life
1 Samuel 19:10 – "And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night."
 2. Saul was relentless. He would not cease his evil course until David was dead.
 3. As David looked out his window and saw himself surrounded by these agents of death he must have felt helpless. How could he fight against such foes? His reaction was singular: He cried out to God:
 "Deliver me! Deliver me!"
 4. Sometimes when our situation is the most critical our prayers are the most brief.
 - a. We can see this in the case of the disciples during the fierce storm:
Matthew 8:25 – "And his disciples came to *him*, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish."
 - b. When Peter was sinking beneath the waves:
Matthew 14:30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.
 - B. As David pondered his situation he gained confidence from his righteous life
Psalm 59:3 – "For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD."

1. It was David's consistent practice to appeal to his righteous life
Psalm 35:19 – “Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: *neither* let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.”
Psalm 109:3-4 – “They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause. ⁴ For my love they are my adversaries: but I *give myself unto prayer*.”
Psalm 119:78 – “Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: *but* I will meditate in thy precepts.”
Psalm 119:161 – “Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.”
2. This is also consistent with the Second David
John 15:24-25 – “If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. ²⁵ But *this cometh to pass*, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.”
3. This must also be true of us
1 Peter 2:11-12 – “Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; ¹² Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”
1 Peter 3:16-17 – “Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. ¹⁷ For *it is* better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.”
 - a. We are only confident before God as our holy character reflects Him—as we bear the fruit of regeneration.
 - b. Sin always robs us of our confidence before God
4. With this confidence of the justness of his cause he prays with confidence.
 - a. He prays to God as the great Ruler of the great heavenly army
“O LORD God of hosts”
 - b. He prays knowing that this great conquering King was on his side
“O God, be merciful to me and not to them.”
Psalm 59:5 – “Thou therefore, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen: be not merciful to any wicked transgressors.”

II. Verses 6-13 – David declares his confidence in God

- A. David again declares the wickedness of his enemies
 1. **Verse 6** – they howl like a pack of dogs on the hunt. Dog's in David's day were lean, hungry, savage scavengers.
 2. **Verse 7** – they use their lips as weapons speaking all manner of wickedness towards David.

- a. Looking back at **Psalm 22** we can hear the words of our Lord, **Psalm 22:13** – “They gaped upon me *with* their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.”
 - b. We read it again in **Psalm 35**
Psalm 35:16 – “With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.”
 3. They pretended that God was deaf to their blasphemies
- B. David’s confidence was that God *did* hear
Psalm 59:8 – “But thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.”
1. David also wrote this back in **Psalm 2**
Psalm 2:4 – “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.”
 2. It isn’t a laughter of hilarity but of mockery and contempt. It is a laughter over the futility of rising up against God. Because God didn’t immediately react they pretended He did not care.
 3. David knew that God would act in His perfect timing and consume them in His mighty power
- C. Because of God’s mighty power David patiently and confidently waited
Psalm 59:9 – “*Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for God is my defence.*”
1. He knew God would come to his defense
 2. David knew that there were high purposes involved
Verses 11-13 –
 - a. David knew if God destroyed them outright they would be dead and the people would forget the fearful hand of God. They would forget that God doesn’t overlook the wickedness of man.
 - b. But if David’s enemies were reduced to beggars and vagabonds it would be a continual reminder of the just judgment of God.
 - c. It is also true that the continued presence of enemies in the lives of God’s people keeps them vigilant and keeps them looking to God as their great Deliverer.
 3. What a prayer of confidence. David knew the overthrow of his enemies was so sure and so certain his main concern was that it not happen too quickly.
 4. Knowing the perfect timing of God and God’s almighty power and his righteous cause David prayed with confidence and waited with expectation. David’s words were the words of faith.
- D. Few understand the great power in the prayers of God’s people
1. Spurgeon: “Saul had more cause to fear than David had, for the invincible weapon of prayer was being used against him, and heaven was being aroused to give him battle.”
 2. John Knox was credited with flaming the fires of the Reformation in Scotland. In response to Knox’s imprecatory prayers, Mary Queen of Scots is reputed to have said: “I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe.”

III. **Verses 14-17** – David celebrates God as his great Deliverer

A. In **Verses 14-15** David repeats his earlier statement in **Verse 6**

1. In essence he is saying, “Let them do their worst!”
2. Let them do what wicked people do.

But I will engage my energy in trusting God and singing forth His praises

B. David declares his great song of praise – **Verses 16-17**

1. What a contrast between the howlings of the dogs and the praises of God’s people. When the dogs face want and hunger they howl in their discontent. When God’s people face times of trouble their hearts sing forth in praise.
2. We should maintain a song upon our heart – a song of rejoicing and a song of praise.
3. This should be particularly true when we are facing times of trouble. It’s one thing to praise God when we are in times of fullness, but what about times of want
4. Listen to Paul:
Philippians 4:12-13 – “I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”
5. God sustains us through the night, through the times of darkness. We can rejoice in His wondrous mercy. It is a song of gratitude, a song of thanksgiving.

Psalms 59:16 – “But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.”

Conclusion:

1. David’s heart was filled with a song and with joy because his continual focus was upon God.
The word for “wait” in **Verse 9** (שָׁמַר *shamar*) means to “watch” or to “keep guard” NAS and ESV – “I will watch for You”
2. Do you lack joy? Joy comes as keep our focus upon God.
Listen to our Lord.
Luke 2:49 – “And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”
Literally: “the things of My Father”
His focus was continually upon the things of God.
3. As you go through the trials of this life keep your eyes upon our great deliverer. This will keep a song on your tongue and joy in your heart.