

Courage by Praising the Word of Our Merciful, Powerful God**Tuesday, June 21, 2022 ▫ Read Psalm 56**

Questions from the Scripture text: When did David write this Psalm (superscript)? To Whom does he look for mercy (v1)? Why not to man? What do his enemies do (v2a)? How few are they (v2b)? What does David sometimes feel (v3a)? What will he do then (v3b)? What does David praise (v4a)? What does David do to Him (v4b)? What will he not do (v4c)? What is the expected answer to the question in v4d? What do the enemies do (v5a)? Why (v5b)? What do they do (v6)? What is the expected answer to v7a? What will God do, and does David pray, in v7b? How does v8 describe the Lord's personal care (cf. v6b)? When will God turn back the enemies (v9a–b)? Why will God listen? In What gets repeated three more times in v10a, 10b, 11a (cf. v3b, 4a, v4b)? What is repeated in v11 as a whole (cf. v4)? What does he remember about making vows in v12a? What vow does he now make in v12b? What two things do v13a–b say God has done for David? Unto what end (v13c–d)?

How does one escape overwhelming storms of attack and betrayal? Psalm 56 looks forward to the opening portion of morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these thirteen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that when men oppose us with their evil thoughts, words, and deeds, believers trust and praise an incomparable God Whose thoughts, words, and deeds are for us and for our deliverance.

Understanding that there are other ways to organize our thoughts in this Psalm according to the Hebrew poetry, we notice that there is this thematic doubling that builds David's hope in God then concludes in his praising the God of His hope.

Only in God is there mercy (v1–2, 5–6). "Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up" (v1a). As David echoes in 2Sam 24:14, the LORD's mercies are great, but there is no true mercy with man. His understanding of his enemies' sinfulness in v5b echoes Gen 5:6 and 8:21. It is only in God, to Whom righteously belongs wrath, that we can have true hope for mercy. How great and generous, then, is this mercy that He shows such sinners as we are!

Only in God is there power (v3–4). It is not only God's merciful disposition toward us, but also His almighty power over all things, that fortifies our hope in Him. *Whenever* I am afraid, I can trust in God. Why? Because He is almighty. Whatever the terror, He is stronger. He created all things by His Word and upholds all things by the Word of His power. Those who know this, and praise His Word (v4a) rightly ask that question, "What can flesh do to me?" and rightly answer, "Nothing!"

Always, in God, there is justice (v7). v7 asks another question whose obvious answer is negative. "Shall they escape by iniquity?" No. God is angry every day (cf. Ps 7:11), even if His wisdom patiently endures the wicked for a time, for a good reason (cf. Rom 2:4, 3:25, Rom 9:22–23). What David knew about his attackers, you can always know about those harming you: God will cast them down (v7b)!

Always, in God, there is mercy (v8–9). David knew God's constant, righteous disposition toward his enemies. But David also knew God's constant, merciful disposition toward him. "You number my wanderings" (v8a). Every pain, every misery, of David's life might have been invisible to others, but not to God. They might have been insignificant to others, but not to God. God's care for David's sorrow was such that he pictures God bottling his tears (v8b), not allowing a single tear to escape his notice or go uncared for. v8c intensifies this point by picturing God as keeping an inventory/record book of all that His servant has gone through. How intimately, constantly, exhaustively our compassionate God cares for every trouble and every sorrow of His people!

Why is David sure that his cry is heard (v9a)? Why is he sure that the answer will be fulfilled (v9b)? Because God is for him (v9c). We know that all things work together for our good (cf. Rom 8:28), because God is for us; so no one and nothing can prevail against us (cf. Rom 8:31)!

Always, in God, there is power (v10–11). In vv3–4, we saw that mere flesh cannot frighten us if almighty God is our trust. v11 concludes the same thing, but there is a doubling of the foundation in v10. The more David praises, the more he realizes that he has been created (v10a) and redeemed (v10b, note the covenant Name) to praise! And if he has been created and redeemed to praise, then sure the LORD is always exercising His power in David's best interests.

Always, unto God, let there be the lip (v12) and the life (v13) of praise. David responds by affirming that vows are worship (v12a) and then *making a vow to worship* (v12b). To the lip of praise in v12b, he adds the life of praise—walking before God in the light of the living (v13c–d, cf. Rom 12:1). The realization that we were created and redeemed for God's praise should do more than neutralize our fear. It should provoke us *unto actual praising.*

What threats are you tempted to fear? What sorrows are you tempted to be overwhelmed by? How does praising God help you in such situations? When/how can you apply this remedy?

Sample prayer: Our merciful, powerful God, thank You for creating us by Your Word and upholding all things by Your Word. We praise Your Word! By the praise of Your Word, You remind us that while man is merciless, You are full of mercy. While man is powerless, You are full of power. Surely, You have created us and redeemed us for Your praise. Grant that we would vow to praise You and keep our vows by praising You. Grant that we would walk before You in the light of the living, which we ask through Him who is our light and life, even Jesus Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP55A "Give Ear" or TPH55 "O Hear My Cry for Mercy"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Psalm 56 is the words of God to the chief musician, set to the silent dove and distant lands, Amit Tom of David. When the Flystones captured him in Gaff, 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, almost high.

Whenever I am afraid. I will trust in you and God I will praise His Word and God I have put my trust. I will not fear what can flesh do to me 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 and anger cast down the people. So God you number my wanderings. You put my tears into your bottle, Are they not in your book when I cry out to you, then my enemies will turn back this.

I know because God is for me and God I will praise His Word and Yahweh. I will praise his word and God I have put my trust. I'll not be afraid. What can man do to me? Vowels 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 and the light of the living so far, God's inspired and inherent word. So, the Psalm tells us in the superscript, which, of course, is Hebrew scripture. When this was written, the context, the situation in which David wrote this prayer.

And this song that the Holy Spirit has recorded both for Christ's own use as he would have read and prayed and sung. This psalm growing up and Then for our use in union with Christ. And by instruction of the Holy Spirit and the situation that he was in was he was captured in gath of the Philistines.

And if we were to go back and look at the record of it in first Samuel 21, we would find that not only was he in the hometown of Goliath, but he had the very recognizable. He'd just got done saying there is nothing like it sword of Goliath and so the he was the Slayer of the hometown hero and now they had him captured there and certainly he had some allies and we could go back and we'd look at like, look at that in the text, but when we read in the Psalm of all day, long enemies, twisting his words continuously plotting against him.

Their thoughts are against me for evil or for harm. Um, really worked and mean both things there. And they have these little gatherings and they hide apparently, either David has special knowledge from the Holy Spirit or he has good situation awareness and they're not hiding as well as they think they are as they track him and lie and wait for him, He's in a very dangerous position.

Yes, those who are doing everything they can to bring an end to him. And yet he has access to a mercy and a power that they do not know about for they have pushed down on the knowledge of God. And this is true of all of the Lord's enemies.

They are merciless of course, but they think they some themselves powerful and they don't know because they have denied the Lord and they have pushed down on knowledge of him that they are just storing up wrath against themselves for the day of wrath. That's the only reason they still exist, that's the only reason they seem to still have any power, the believer in the Lord.

Jesus Christ needs not love his life even unto death because he knows that all at once the wicked are destroyed. They've been set in a slippery place and that the God who will receive us into glory is with us. Even now, We are continually with him. He takes us of other hand.

He guides us by, by his counsel and afterward, he will receive us into glory. And so we have those assurances from Romans 2 and from Psalm 73 that David also had He knew where there was mercy. There would not be mercy in man. God is the one who is merciful and so he says be merciful to me.

O God for man would swallow me up this reflects the, the thinking of David. You remember when God was angry with Israel and wanted to punish them? And so he allowed David to be tempted by the pride of his own heart to, to take the illegal census. And you remember how obvious it was that it was a judgment because you had Joab speaking for what was right.

And David refusing to do what is right? Even even at Joabs protestations, But then when, when David realizes that, it was sinful when the Lord confronts it, but Lord gives him three options. And you remember the way he chose he said let me not fall into the hand of man.

Let me fall into God to hand of God and not the hand of man for God, is merciful. And man is not. So you have the same sort of thinking here, be merciful to me. Oh God for man would swallow me up. There is a temptation to shrink from God in our hearts because we know His holiness, we know His justice we know his righteousness but it is important that we not divide God into parts that we remember that he is always everything that he is perfectly That's what's called the simplicity of God.

And so he is merciful and we know him primarily as the God whom we know in Christ, he has put his divine nature on display and the creation. He's put his image in us, but the primary way in which God has made himself known, is in Jesus. No one has seen God at any time.

The only begotten son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has revealed him fully revealed Him. Exegetated him. It's the language there. In John chapter 1, You remember, Philip asking to see the father and Jesus saying, have I been with you so long Philip and you, you still don't know me.

And so always remember that God has chosen to reveal himself to you, first and foremost in the person of Jesus. When in the person of the Son, when he came and became a man as Jesus Christ in order to save us, That is although God is perfectly, fully always everything that he is, there is a differentiation in how he has chosen to display himself to us and he prefers the display of his mercy.

You see the comparison of those two things in Romans, chapter 9, when he says that he does is willing to display, his wrath against unrighteousness and ungodliness. But he patiently endures the vessels that are prepared for destruction because his his chosen way of showing the riches of his glory is in his mercy.

So God wants us to know him as merciful and and you need to have that theology in place. You might think it's strange. That David would be on the run from Saul and then captured in gaff and his conclusion is that God has merciful, be merciful to me, O God for man would swallow me up But the reason is because it is not his circumstances that are defining and shaping his knowledge of God.

It's his theology has knowledge of God in himself from his Word And you see that several times in the Psalm. Psalm 56:4, I will praise His word, two more times in verse 10. I will praise his word. I will praise his word by His word. He created all things by his word.

He up olds all things and he addresses us, he addresses us by his word and his word tells us that although we deserve hell, he has provided atonement in our place that our sin might be put away that he might give us the blessing that belongs to him and to his righteousness.

This is very important for you to drink, treat to drink deeply at the, well of God's Word that you would know him that you would not minimize his righteousness, or his holiness or has justice at all. But that seeing these greatly, you would see therefore all the more, the holiness, or the mercy of God, which is that attribute of his that he has, most displayed that he has made central and most forward in his display of himself to us in his work.

And then of course, for us in the Lord, Jesus Christ. So only in God as their mercy, on the one hand, we were talking about. Not shrinking from God, because of our sin and his, his holiness. But laying hold of his mercy in repentance from our sin and trusting in Christ and rejoicing over him but also don't make the mistake of looking somewhere else.

For mercy, men are merciful but it is God, who is merciful to you through them and do not think in particular that you are going to get mercy from a hostile culture. If you just adapt well enough to make them like you, This is a great mistake today in many churches and in many Christians hearts.

Yes, do all. That is right. And upright and loving to your neighbor and even your enemy, but do not think that you will provoke your enemy to be merciful to you. The only ones will be merciful to you are the ones in whom grace is making them merciful, as God is merciful.

Who have been converted to Christ by the resurrecting spiritually resurrecting, work of the Holy Spirit. So, don't entrust yourself to man and trust yourself to God in your troubles, you say, be merciful to me. Oh God. And just as only God is merciful, then there is also the wonderful truth.

Only God is powerful, man. Seems powerful to us. But then when we are praising God's Word, we are realizing that he is the creator of that. He is a sustainer of all things and we suddenly realize the answer to the question in verse 4. What can flesh do to me and the answer in the question of the in the question of verse 11.

What can man do to me is nothing or more accurately only that which God has intended for mercy because God is powerful. Man is just flesh. And so Well. So we must remember that. Only God is powerful. So only in God is their mercy. Only in God is their power.

We need not fear, always in God. There is justice. David might have been tempting to think about his own escape, but that's not the question. He asks in verse 7. It's shall they escape by iniquity? And therefore, he realizes that, he's not the one who's in trouble. They're the ones who are in trouble because God is just God is always just and he never set aside in his justice and not only is God.

The only one who is merciful, he is always merciful. Look at verse 8, you number. My wanderings put my tears into your bottle. Are they not in your book? God is full of compassion, has merciful disposition towards his people is constant. We're going to hear. We were going to hear yesterday and the passage when God when Jesus says to Paul, I will show him how many things he must suffer for my namesake.

That there's a number, Jesus has a specific number of the things that the Apostle will suffer. The every suffering you have as one that the Lord knows about and he cares about it's not a cold calculating. These are the number of sufferings that are assigned for her or these are the number of sufferings that are assigned for him as you go through them, He keeps an inventory.

He stocked, he stalks the tears and keeps an inventory of them. That's the, that's the word picture there In verse 8, you number my wanderings, but my tears into your bottle, Are they not in your book? And so, he knows that not only is God, the only one who's merciful, but he's always merciful, even in your suffering, He knows about that suffering.

He carries you through it. He counts every tear that has said. He hears every cry verse 9 and our cries are unto. God are are effective verse 9 When we pray to him, or when David prays to him, when we pray to him, then his enemies will turn back.

Why? Because God, God, is is for him, God is always merciful to us, and his mercy, doesn't take breaks. He notices everything. He cares about everything and, therefore, we remember the reason that we were made to worship God, verse 12, especially in the worship assembly. The the vows that are that are upon us before, God are, especially those promises that we make to God, as we worship Him, we're made to give him not just the lip of worship, rendering praises singing and praying and and so forth.

The formal worship even like we're doing now or like we do in the congregation of the Lord's Day, but also the life of worship. The reason he has delivered our soul from death and kept our feet from falling verse 13 is so that we would walk before him. And the light of the living that our whole walking, our whole living would be something that we are offering to God all the time.

And so we're delivered from fear of the enemy knowing that God is being merciful to us, that God is more powerful, that the enemy can't do anything that God is continually caring that it's as if he has an inventory or a record book of every suffering and every tear and he removes from us the distress so that we may both offer him those formal set times of worship offering and offer him.

The lip of praise what you don't have to do. Only in set times of worship. You praise God with your lips at other times along the force but also the life of worship. Let's pray our Father in heaven. We thank you that you have that you have given us.

This portion of your word for there are many times and which we have many enemies who seem very powerful and very intent and very coordinated and yet, oh God, you are merciful to us. We know that because you've revealed yourself most of all in Christ who loved us and gave himself for us and whom you gave in your love for us.

And so, we pray that you would keep our hearts and minds stayed upon you, in the midst of all of our life. Help us not to fear. Oh Lord. But to praise your word and by your praises, even to be strengthened and therefore and thereby to be brought into more praising of you so that we would be more strength and so that we would praise more and so forth.

We thank you for the way that you have designed our lives to have this wonderful cycle of reinforcement. In it in us, in our lives. And we pray, O Lord that you would help us to get started or get back to it or keep on in it. Whichever the case may be that our hearts will be full of praise to you.

We ask in Jesus name. Amen.