

May 11

Scriptures: Read Psalms 60, 61 & 62

Key Verse: “Through God we will do valiantly...” (Psalm 60:12)

Overview

In Psalm 60, we learn of the turmoil that was in the land when David became king. It was common in those days for there to be uprisings against a new monarch; so David was forced to engage in battle against three different surrounding countries simultaneously, as we learn from the title of this psalm (cf. 2 Samuel 8:3-6, 13-16; 1 Chronicles 18:5,12-15). While David was fighting in the north against Mesopotamia and Aram Zobah (Syria), he was attacked from the far southeast by the Edomites who thought to take advantage of the situation. David dispatched Joab and Abishai with some troops, and they won a tremendous victory. By the time the title of this psalm was written, they had a reported amount of 12,000 Edomite casualties, but the final historical records show there were actually 18,000 (2 Samuel 8:13; 1 Chronicles 18:12).

The psalm reflects Israel’s attitude before the outcome of the battles was known. Israel is demoralized and in a state of panic and despair. They cannot understand the adversity against them. They feel abandoned by God. Actually, these battles proved beneficial for Israel, because they were victorious and their strength increased. David realizes that the time of despairing and complaining is over, for it only does harm. He turns to speak positively and declares that since they fear God and are loved by Him, they will march under His banner for the sake of the truth; and because they are God’s people, and God Himself had laid claim to the land (2 Samuel 7:9-10; Genesis 15:18-22), their salvation and victory over their enemies could be assured.

The Lord honoured the two most outstanding tribes: Ephraim (from Joseph), having great military strength and considered the pride of Israel (cf. Hosea 7:8-10; Genesis 49:22-26) and Judah, the seat of justice and authority (cf. 78:67-68; Genesis 49:10). Their territorial inheritance was the Lord’s, but here the Lord also claims Moab, Edom, and Philistia and makes the inhabitants to be servants of His people. David exclaims that without God’s help their military efforts are futile. Only God could help them take the naturally fortified “strong city” of Edom which was built upon the cliffs (modern day Petra, 60:9-11; Obadiah 3), and it would be vain to ask the help of alliances (60:11b). The faith-filled exclamation of David, “Through God we will do valiantly”, was indeed fulfilled.

Psalm 61 is the prayer of David when he was in exile, likely due to the rebellion of Absalom. His heart is overwhelmed with grief and loneliness, longing to return to the tabernacle of God in Jerusalem. With the feeling of despair and weakness, David pleads for God to lead him to a place of safety, a rock that is too high for him to reach and too high for his enemies as well. Today, when we make the same request, God will lead us to the Rock, Jesus Christ, where one can find eternal safety.

David recalls the many times in the past that God had been a refuge for him, and this gives him strength and assurance for the present time, as well as hope for the future. He resolves to trust in God and is sure God has heard him and will grant his longings: to have fellowship with God

(abide in His tabernacle forever, 23:6; 27:4-5) and to be protected under His wings. With confidence, the psalmist believes that he and others who fear God will receive their promised inheritance, for they are heirs of the Lord (cf. Romans 8:17). Based upon God's mercy and truth, king David also believes that God will give him a long life, as well as an enduring dynasty, which was fulfilled in the Messiah, Jesus Christ (2 Samuel 7:16). His confidence in God's deliverance makes him determined to keep his daily vow of offering unto God the sacrifice of praise.

Psalms 62 is a song of total confidence in God as David's sole help and all-sufficiency. David uses his own trust in God to serve as an example and exhorts others to also trust in their divine refuge (62:8). It is a psalm of contrasts between the behaviour and trust of the righteous (62:1-2, 5-7) and that of the wicked (62:3-4, 9-10). David expresses his complete trust in God alone. His quiet spirit waits on God for his salvation, for his only hope is in God (62:1, 5). Since God is his Rock, he knows that the storms of life cannot uproot him nor shake his faith. In contrast, the wicked will easily fall and perish, because they harm others and are hypocrites. They are not steadfast upon the Rock but are lighter than vapours, because they trust in oppression, robbery, and riches. The increase of riches is not condemned for those who come by it honestly, but David's concern is that the people not set their heart on riches, for that is in vain. In summary, David proclaims God's power and mercy, which are in complete balance when it comes time for God to "render to each one according to his work" (62:12; Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:6-10).

Prayer

Thank You, dear Lord, that we do not fight our battles alone. When we place our total trust in You, You honour Your Word and bring total victory to us, especially over our chief enemy, Satan.