

**Sunday, April 26**

**Pastor Eric Dubois**

**Psalm 57 (Storms of Destruction)**

**Intro**

Calamity is nothing new to the human race. Throughout history humanity has faced a variety of threats: wars and leaders bent on expanding their empire, plagues, starvation, great depressions, natural disasters, threats of nuclear war. These threats naturally create fear.

Likewise, today there are a number of external threats that can create fear in our hearts: the possibility of dying through Coronavirus infection, the government using this as a precedent to take away our rights (some of you fear this), local and national economic collapse ruining our quality of life, job loss resulting in loss of income and loss of savings, retirement accounts tanking because of a stock market collapse, or even increased crime because our police are spread thin.

Threats do exist. And the dangers posed by them create fear. So how should we respond? Some respond with depression while others try to dull the pain with entertainment. Some attempt to maintain control of situation. We think of hoarding toilet paper and other goods. Others grow impatient and become hostile. What can bring peace rather than fear at this time?

This morning we examine the response of one who was being hunted down to be killed. How did he respond? What did he think? Where did he look? This morning we see that...

**BIG IDEA: The presence of external dangers requires a Godward response**

**READ PASSAGE Pslam 57**

**PRAY**

**Body**

**Passage Focus**

Psalm 57 = a response to unsettling circumstances that provoke fear...4 ways we should respond

**Response 1: When facing external dangers, trust that God is mercifully disposed to those who rely on him (57:1)**

**Context**

Psalm 57 context is external dangers David was facing

- after David defeated Goliath Saul became jealous because of the praise David received (1 Sam 18:6-9)
- Previously Saul tried to kill David with a spear (1 Sam 19:10)
- Saul sent messengers to David's house on a stake-out to kill him, but David's wife, Saul's daughter, alerted David and he escaped (1 Sam 19:11)
- David was hiding in a cave and Saul and his men were on the hunt to kill David when he wrote this Psalm
- maybe 1 Sam 22:1-2 when David was hiding in the cave of Adullam

- maybe 1 Sam 24:1-7 when David was hiding in a cave in the wilderness of the Engedi (in this circumstance David caught Saul relieving himself and could have killed Saul = possible reference to “they have fallen into it themselves” – 57:6)

In any event, the context for Psalm 57 is a time when David was on the run from Saul and hiding in a cave. David’s life was in danger because enemies were seeking to find him so they could put him to death.

A unstable madman → a large army → dangerous weapons → how close were they? → what would they do if they caught me? → where is God? didn’t he promise me the throne? how could this be?

### **MAKE IT FEEL REAL!**

**FCF:** David was facing an external threat that put his life at risk = “storms of destruction (57:1).” Destruction speaks of calamity, like what came upon Job (see Job 6:30; 30:13 where the same word “destruction” was used). Enemy danger is described as lions, fiery beasts, spears and arrows, sharp swords (57:4) = David’s enemies are dangerous. David’s enemies have set a net and dug a pit (57:6) = they have planned out his destruction.

David shows us how to respond when dangers that create fear surround us.

### **Explanation**

So how did David respond? David began by appealing to God for mercy in prayer. In his time of need, David humbled himself and sought God for help. In other words, he wasn’t self-sufficient. He knew he needed God.

Refuge: used of hiding place to avoid an attack or shelter in a rainstorm or safe height in battle = place of protection from dangerous threats

“takes refuge” = the act of taking refuge in a particular place

So when David needed protection, the place where he hid was God. In effect, taking refuge = trusting in God, placing hope in God.

“for” = cause

In other words, David appeals to God for merciful protection because he places his trust in God. David believed God would show him mercy because David relied on God. Here David is assuming that **God comes to the aid of those who rely upon him.** There is something about God’s character/nature/essence that inclines him to help those who trust in him when they are facing external threats. This is what David believes.

### **Application**

So when storms of destruction come... Coronavirus, local and national economic collapse, job loss, loss of income, loss of savings, retirement accounts tanking... where do you turn for protection? What do you functionally trust in?

Do you turn to the world’s cures? Do you seek to dull the pain with entertainment? With food? With alcohol? With drugs? Do you trust these to bring you peace in disturbing times?

Do you trust in yourself by trying to control the situation? But what about those times when you can’t control the situation? If you find yourself restricted at home and at risk you can’t fix it. If you find yourself losing

money because your employment is non-essential you can't fix it. You're just like David. David couldn't fix it. Saul's army far outnumbered his. David needed God to act! He couldn't trust in himself.

When facing storms of destruction, we need humility and trust. We cannot be self-sufficient. Do you admit your need for God and humbly seek his merciful intervention?

**Gospel: how we came is how we continue → humble and in need of Christ's provision**

David trusted God because he knew God's character: **God is mercifully disposed to those who rely on him.** When facing external dangers, we can trust in God's character.

**Response 2: When facing external dangers, trust that God will bring his purpose for you to completion (57:2-3)**

### **Explanation**

Why does David cry out to God? We already learned that David believes God is merciful to people who rely upon him. In 57:2, we learn that David cries out to God because he believes God "fulfills his purpose for me." The Hebrew literally reads, "to God who completes for me." In other words, God will complete what he has intended for David. David cries out to God for mercy **because he trusts that God will bring to completion what he purposed for David's life.**

This is why David is confident God will deliver him from Saul's military forces: "He will send from heaven and save me; he will put to shame him who tramples on me (57:3)."

God had a purpose for David. God had already torn the kingdom from Saul and anointed David as king (1 Sam 15:28; 16:12-13), so David was confident God would deliver him now.

David was sure "God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness (57:3)!" Note that God's steadfast love and faithfulness are active. They are not just abstract facts about God. God's steadfast love and faithfulness towards us drives him to act for us. God's steadfast love for David and his faithfulness towards David will cause God to shame David's enemies. God's love for his people causes him to act on their behalf when they face external dangers.

### **Application**

What does this mean for us? We should believe what David did: that God will bring to completion the purposes he has for our lives. No power of hell, no scheme of man can interfere with God's purpose for our lives. As long as God's purpose for us remains incomplete, we cannot perish at the hands of attacking forces, whether the Coronavirus or any other external dangers.

For example, God protected the apostle Paul until his time was up. He was delivered from dangers over and over again (Jewish plots to kill him, stoning, shipwreck, etc.). But when the work God had entrusted to Paul was complete, God allowed Paul to be executed.

In David's case, right thinking led to right responses. So it is with us. If we understand God is mercifully disposed towards us, we will turn to him. If we understand that God has an indestructible purpose for us, we will have confidence that nothing that happens to us is outside of God's will. Put differently, everything that comes into our lives is willed by God. Some things God directly sends, others he permits. This why Romans 8:28 is true:

**Romans 8:28** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

This is why Matthew 10:31 is true:

**Matthew 10:29** Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

This is why Joseph could explain his slavery, imprisonment, and rise to power to his brothers in these terms:

**Genesis 50:20** As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Do you believe God has a purpose for you that must be completed?

Why was David certain of God's intervention? Maybe God had delivered him from attackers before (e.g., Goliath). Maybe the tide was turning and David sensed the defeat of his enemies was imminent. Maybe David simply remembered that the throne would be taken from Saul and given to David. David at minimum knew he would eventually replace Saul. If David was to be king, surely God had to protect him in this instance.

When faced with storms of destruction, how can we have the certainty David had? We may not have a promise that we will become king of Israel, but there are two truths in Psalm 57 that clearly relate us:

- 1) God is mercifully disposed to those who rely on him
- 2) God has a purpose for us that must be completed

A few cautions in case you're getting the wrong idea. First, these truths don't promise that we will be free from trials. After all, David was being hunted down to be killed. Second, these truths don't promise that God will bless our foolish choices and we can disregard wisdom. Foolish choices have consequences. We reap what we sow. David's bad choices after he was on the throne led to numerous breakdowns in his family. Third, these truths don't promise some clearly defined formula. David himself didn't know how God would protect him from external threats. He only knew that God would protect him, because his purpose was not yet completed. God's protection, steadfast love, and faithfulness in storms of destruction like the Coronavirus could be direct intervention of protection (e.g., healing, preventing you from getting the virus), wisdom given that guides you to avoid danger, sending fellow believers to meet your need, previous savings he enabled you to acquire, bringing information to you about a new job, or empowering grace to endure.

Don't be paralyzed with fear in these days. Instead, have confidence in God. God's provision for us when we face external threats is this: his steadfast love and faithfulness that expresses itself in a merciful and purposed protection.

**Point 3: When facing external dangers, trust that God will protect you because of his steadfast love (57:6-10)**

### **Explanation**

David believes deliverance is certain: "They dug a pit in my way, but they have fallen into it themselves (57:6)." So in 57:7-9, vows to God devotion and public praise.

"My heart is steadfast (57:7)" = personal vow to God of settled commitment. David's commitment will result in praising God through song before the unbelieving Gentile nations, with both singing and stringed

instruments. 57:9 is parallelism. Giving thanks and singing praises before the Gentiles are the same thing. David will sing praises by giving thanks. But why is David moved to praise the Lord through song? Because God's "steadfast love is great to the heavens, [his] faithfulness to the clouds (57:10)."

"For" indicates the cause. David's praise is grounded in his understanding of God's steadfast love and faithfulness.

steadfast love (hard to put into words) = committed love in the context of relationship that was freely given out of kindness and not obligatory, but now entails obligation because of pledged commitment...springs from one's character (God's nature) and results in external actions of kindness (God's activity) = "I will never leave you nor forsake you (Heb 13:5)" = this is how God related to Israel & having entered into relationship with God, this is how God relates to us = steadfast love

faithfulness = dependable, reliable

God's steadfast love is why David trusted his deliverance was certain (57:3). And God's steadfast love is why David will praise God publicly (57:10).

**Gospel: if you exercise faith and repent, God will enter into commitment with you...his steadfast love will follow you all of your days**

### **Application**

When faced with external threats, where does your mind go?

When you see people dying, the stock market tanking, unemployment skyrocketing, churches unable to gather, and a quick end nowhere in sight...How can we return to work, go to Disney World, or hold a Sunday morning service when the disease passes easily, when 25% who get it won't ever feel any effect, when the disease is deadly to many within PCC? When you see these things, where does your mind go?

I am painting a bleak picture. Like David painted a bleak picture. Hiding in a cave. Armies hunting him down to kill him. Savage beasts with weapons. Plans made for his capture and destruction.

But David saw an active force, God's steadfast love, present in the middle of storms of destruction. Steadfast love may not have been visible with the eyes. But it was present nonetheless. Like the effects of the gospel are present despite what we see on the news. The gospel is still converting sinners and edifying saints. Just like God's steadfast love is supporting the saints in the middle of the Coronavirus pandemic. What do you see right now? Fear and despair? Or steadfast love watching over you and ready to act on your behalf as you rely on God?

Use this opportunity to consider God's steadfast love. Consider the implications of the fact that God's "I will never leave you nor forsake you" love is present with you throughout this Coronavirus season. Trust in God because of his committed disposition to you. Trust in God because his commitment to you causes him to act on your behalf. God indeed is our refuge! Because his love is steadfast. This is reason to praise him at the office, in the neighborhood, at the grocery store, in conversation with unbelieving family.

The battle is this: will I trust God's commitment to me? Look to the cross. Where Jesus died for your rebellion, your sins. At the cross we see God's steadfast love in action.

**Response 4: When facing external dangers, long for God to be glorified (57:5, 11)**

### **Explanation**

57:11 repeats the Godward plea of 57:5 – “Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!” Having been captivated by God’s steadfast love, David longs for God to be glorified in the midst of his present danger. What is glory?

Glory = speaks of someone or something that is noteworthy and has a visual component. In the case of God, God’s glory is a visible manifestation of his splendor, whether his righteousness, faithfulness, salvation, or judgment. Oftentimes these aspects of God’s splendor are on display in the same event. Like in the Exodus. God’s glory was publicly manifested when he overthrew Pharaoh at the Red Sea. God was righteous to punish the Egyptians. He was faithful to keep his promises to Moses. To Abraham. And God’s victory over Pharaoh simultaneously resulted in Israel’s salvation and Egypt’s judgment.

So David is essentially calling on God to act in a way that will bring attention to God. David wants God to deliver him in such a way that God’s power and rule and righteousness and faithfulness will be clearly manifested for all to see. David’s assumption is this: if God acts on my behalf to deliver me from this mighty army that is pursuing me, it will be clear for all to see that God is the all-powerful ruler of the world who is worthy of honor and praise and keeps his promises.

### **Application**

In addition to his own circumstances, David was concerned about God’s glory. These are not mutually exclusive because God’s glory is on display when he delivers his people from harm. We are the humble creatures in need of divine assistance. God is the exalted Creator with the power and kindness to deliver the weak. When we humble ourselves and depend on God, and when God acts powerfully on our behalf, we are delivered and God is glorified.

This suggests that dangers have a purpose: to bring glory to God. How might God acting in steadfast love on our behalf in the midst of the Coronavirus bring himself glory? As we turn to God for protection in this season we show our neighbors where trust should be placed. And as God protects us, provides for us, and strengthens us, God shows the world that his promises are true. And even if death through the Coronavirus marks the completion of our purpose here on earth, God is glorified in our humble dependence till the end.

### **Conclusion**

In the midst of being hunted down, what fueled David’s passion for God’s glory? First, David’s confidence that **God is mercifully disposed to those who rely on him**. So rely on God in confidence that he acts for us when we seek his help. God is with us! Second, David’s confidence that **God will bring his purpose for him to completion**. So trust God to bring his purpose for you to completion. God rules over our lives! Third, David’s confidence that **God will protect him because of his steadfast love**. So trust that God’s love for you is steadfast. God will never leave you or forsake you. What should fuel our passion for God? Joyful confidence in God’s commitment to us that drives him to act for us. We joyously live for God because his love for us is steadfast.