

A Better View

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[0:00] I like that song because it deals with the reality of life and that's that we have burdens! But it also is an invitation to us, isn't it? You know, it's saying, come and do this. Come and lay your burdens down. It reminds us of the fact that we don't have to carry these burdens around all the time. Because if you carry a burden around all the time, what happens? You'll get tired. It weighs you down. And it may even be a burden that doesn't seem to be a big thing, but you carry it long enough and guess what? It gets heavy. We understand that physically in our lives. You know, I think about the analogy that goes through my mind is my grandchildren. And they're all young yet, four and under, and they're not very big. I mean, the biggest one of them is only about that big, right? That's not very big. Would you agree with that? And when they come running up to me, what do you think I naturally do? I pick them up, obviously. I love doing that. And I love having them run up to me. And then you carry them around for a while, right? And they're not very heavy at first, right? What happens after about 10 minutes to carry them? Say you're at the zoo or something and they don't want to walk. They want grandpa or grandma or somebody to carry them. What happens after like five, 10 minutes? Yeah. What about after like 20 minutes? It's just like, all right, you got to walk. I can't carry you anymore. Your arm's starting to cramp. But that's the way a burden is. It can start out seeming like it's not a big deal, seeming very small. But if we keep it, it's going to get heavier and heavier. And that's why the reality of that song, lay your burden down. It's saying you don't have to carry that. There's another alternative to that.

And this morning, we're looking at a Psalm. Actually, we're going to be in Psalms chapter 61. So go ahead and turn there and try to find that. And we're going to be mostly in Psalms. There's a couple other verses we're going to look at the end, but we're going to be mostly in Psalm 61.

And it's not a long Psalm. There's only, in fact, I believe, eight. Yeah, there's only eight verses to this Psalm. It's not a long, lengthy Psalm. But this is one of the Psalms that David wrote.

He did not write everything in the book of Psalms, but he wrote a good portion of it. But the life of David, I guess I enjoy looking at David's life because you realize very quickly that he was human, that he was a person like us that had struggles, that had real highs in his life.

But you know what else he had? Yeah, he had some pretty significant lows in his life as well. And he had some big burdens that he carried at times. And this chapter is about some of the burdens that he carried. Now, we don't know exactly when David wrote this, but it was obviously at a time that he was struggling with some things.

[3:01] So Psalm 61, if you found that, if you're able, I'm going to ask you if you would stand as we read God's Word together this morning. We're going to read the whole chapter. Again, it's only eight verses, but listen to what David shares that God inspired him to write in Psalms chapter 61.

Hear my cry, O God. Attend to my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry to you. When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been a shelter for me and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in your tabernacle forever. I will trust in the cover of your wings.

For you, O God, have heard my vows. You have given me the heritage of those that fear your name. You will prolong the king's life and his years as many generations. He shall abide before God forever.

O prepare mercy and truth which may preserve him. So will I sing praise to your name forever that I may daily perform my vows. Let's pray. Lord God, thank you again for this morning that you've given us and remind us that this right now that we have in front of us is an opportunity.

And it's also a choice. We can choose to think about all other things that are on our minds. We can choose to think about our jobs, our day, our family, our plans, what we're having for lunch.

[4:27] We can choose to focus on all those things and be distracted. The alternative, Lord, is that we can focus on you, that we can focus on your word, that we can focus on this psalm that was written for our instruction and that we can learn from it. And Lord, I pray that that is the choice that we would make, that we would focus on you, our relationship with you, and on what you have to teach us on this day.

So Lord, help us to approach your word with that heart, with that desire this morning. Thank you again for your presence in this place. And it's in the name of Jesus Christ that we pray.

Amen. You can be seated this morning. So again, David is writing this psalm and it's pretty evident right at the beginning of this psalm, right off the bat, it becomes quickly evident that he has a need, that he is in a place where he is asking for God to do something. Because look at what the very first verse, and it's not a long verse at all, but what is the first thing he says? Hear my cry. He's asking God already for something, to hear what I have to say, but he doesn't just say, hear my need, or hear what I want from you.

He says, hear my cry. Why do you think it is he used that word cry? When do you cry out? When you need help. A desperate situation. That is when you cry out, isn't it? That's the kind of situation when you realize all of a sudden that you need help. My brother's not here this morning. I don't think he would mind if I share this. It happened many, many, many years ago when we were both living at home. We lived in a house where it was the old wooden paned windows, right? And sometimes, and depending on the weather, those windows may swell a little bit, right? And that means when they swelled, guess what they didn't do? Didn't open real easy and didn't close real easy.

You know what I'm going to share, don't you, mom and dad? And I remember one time in particular, my brother was in his bedroom and the window was having a hard time going shut. So he grabbed hold of the top of it and he really slammed shut. Can you imagine any of the problems that might have been presented to him at that point in time? No, the window didn't shatter. That was not his problem. He had a problem, but that was not it. Yes, the problem was he had wrapped his fingers around the top of the window as he slammed it shut and the window was now shut and wedged into place. The problem was his fingers were also wedged in between the wood. What do you do in a situation like that other than yell because it hurts? And you don't have much leverage to get the window up like this. You can't get down under it like this and he's stuck. And I just remember him hollering from his room that he needed help. I don't remember who went in and helped him with it eventually. It didn't do any favors to the end of his fingers. But that is what we need to kind of the situation we need to think about when we hear the term crying out. It is when you get to a point where you understand that you need help.

[7:46] And for all of us, that can be a different point in time, can't it? You know, I often will be the first to admit I can be very stubborn when it comes to crying out or asking for help. And oftentimes I will let myself get in a very bad situation before I finally acknowledge that I need help. David at least had the wisdom to understand that he needed to cry out to God. So he begins, hear my cry, O God. And again, he's requesting or asking of God. He says, attend, or, you know, attend means it's kind of attention, pay attention to my prayer. Hear what I'm going to ask you for. And that's the other wonderful thing just from this first verse that we can understand. When we cry out to God, does he hear our prayer? If we are a believer, if we are following him, when we cry out to God, does God hear us? Absolutely. We can never be so far away from God that he will not hear our prayer when we cry out to him. If you're a believer.

I mean, there are verses that says that if you're not a believer, that God's ears are shut to you unless you're asking for forgiveness. But for a believer, God's ears are open to us. Hear my cry, attend to my prayer. That's his request or his beginning of it.

The next verse we read lets us in. It gives us a glimpse of the condition that David was in at this point in his life. And these next few words tell us a lot about David's condition at this point in time. He says in verse 2, from the end of the earth will I cry out to you.

What does that mean from the end of the earth? Do you think that was talking about his physical location? Do you think he was literally at the end of the continent, at the end of the earth? So what does that mean? From the end of the earth I cried out to you. It's not talking about his location. So what is it talking about? What's that? No matter where he's at?

What's that? Till the day he dies? You know, when I read that, the thing that I think he's saying, from the end of the earth I cry out to you. I think David was at a point where from the end of the earth that means he feels far removed. He feels a long way away. He feels isolated. He feels alone. He probably has some fear. From the end of the earth I get this picture that he's saying, I'm at the end of my strength is what he's really saying. I'm at the point where I realize I don't have anywhere else to go. And the next part of the verse kind of confirms that, but how often do we feel like that?

Understanding that we feel alone. We feel like we don't know who to go to, where to go to. We feel isolated, cut off, and at the end of our strength. Does that ever happen? For David, I believe this was happening because look at what he says after this. From the end of the earth I will cry out to you. And then he says, when my heart is overwhelmed. What does the word overwhelmed mean?

[11:06] Too much to handle. Life does have a way of overwhelming us at times, doesn't it? And I'm talking about believers as well. Can life be overwhelming? Yes. And we can be full of, life can bring worry. Life can bring fear. And these things can overwhelm us. The situations and circumstances that life brings can leave us to the point where we're full of worry. We're full of uncertainty. We can feel lost. We can feel afraid. It can just feel like too much and our hope can be gone. That is what it means to be overwhelmed. Overwhelmed means there's so much that's come at us that we feel like it's just kind of sweeping us away. That is what overwhelmed means. And I believe that all of us can get that point, or do get at times to that point in our lives where we feel overwhelmed. Travis was just talking in his praise this morning about a series of incidents that happened in his life in a short period of time. Did that feel overwhelming? Yeah. Sometimes it feels like in our lives it's just one thing after another, doesn't it? And sometimes we just feel like we want to say, just stop. I need a moment to breathe. It's overwhelming me. And David said at a point where my heart, when my heart, he doesn't say if, he says when, so he's acknowledging that happens, when my heart is overwhelmed. And folks, one of the things people think that David may have wrote this at one of the times in his life when he was fleeing for his very life.

Here's the thing, that was more than one time. And it was not for a brief period of time, it was for an extended period of time. If you were fleeing for your life, how would you feel?

Scared? You know, David had to flee for his life at one point from King Saul, from the king himself who wanted David dead. That to me would be overwhelming. He was traveling the countryside, hiding out wherever he could because someone, the king himself, wanted him dead. Would that be overwhelming? I think it would. The other time in David's life, it doesn't get any better.

It's when his son, Absalom, wanted to kill him. And David fled for his life. Does that sound like a good situation? I mean, two situations that would have felt overwhelming, the king trying to kill you, or your very own son, wanting you dead. I don't think any of us are going to be in either one of those situations. Do you? I don't see that happening in my future. Caleb, you're not going to want me dead, are you? Not right now, he said. I think I'm safe for that. We don't have a king, and I don't think I'd be important enough anyway for anybody to want me dead. So I don't think those two things are going to have an impact on me. But what does that mean for us in our lives? We're not going to have the king chasing us for our life. We're not going to have our son trying to kill us, our daughter.

So what does that mean? It means any situation where we are overwhelmed. And that can be so many situations. We have situations that come up in our lives where, and I wrote down a few words that I think David was probably feeling, and for some reason they all start with a D. I don't know.

[14:43] Dismayed, discouraged, distressed, and depressed. Quite the words, aren't they? Any of those things you want to feel? Boy, I hope I'm depressed tomorrow. I hope I'm distressed tomorrow. I hope I'm dismayed. I hope I am discouraged. Those are things we don't want in our lives, and yet, do they come? Yes. And they can come for a lot of reason. Some of the things I wrote down, they can be relational. That means we can feel overwhelmed, distressed, discouraged, depressed because of some relationships in our lives, can't we? It can be relationships with our children.

It could be relationships with our parents. It could be relationships with a sibling, with a family member, with a co-worker, with whoever. A relationship that is struggling, that is hurtful, that is, you were disappointed, let down, and it can seem overwhelming and can be very discouraging. Would you agree with that? That can overwhelm us. It could be health-related. Do we understand that one? To get you distressed, for most of us, do we understand that only means like one phone call or one trip to a doctor's office and that can hit us that quick? That we can be distressed because of news we get about our health or the health of someone that we love? Do we have control over that? No. And it can be overwhelming. It can have to do with our finances can be overwhelming, can't it? One bill after another comes due. One thing after another in our home breaks down or quits working. One thing after another comes and all of a sudden it's like, all right, this is the amount of money I have and this is what I need to pay for and this is less than that. That's a problem, isn't it? Is that discouraging? Yes. And maybe it can even just be life itself, can't it?

Aren't there times just in life when life itself seems overwhelming? All these things can leave us dismayed, discouraged, distressed, and depressed. It's a human condition.

[16:54] And here's the problem. When we deal with any of these things, these conditions, these situations can get to the point where they seem so large and we seem so stuck in them that we don't see a way out.

They get us in this valley and there is one thing about being in a valley. What is your view like when you are in a valley? It's not a good view, is it? You only see the things around you because then it just goes up and you can't see very far in any direction. That's what happens when these situations in our lives happen.

They put us in a valley where we're discouraged and distressed and depressed and dismayed. We're in this valley and we cannot see very far. We often cannot see out of that. And folks, that's the reason.

You know, it's not complicated why suicides happen in the world around us. I know that's a topic none of us like talking about, but it's not difficult to understand why it happens because people get in these valleys and they don't see a way out of that. They can't see beyond the situation or circumstance that they find themselves in. But let's not fool ourselves. We can be in situations like that where we don't see a way out. And I'm not saying we contemplate suicide, but I'm saying it gets to the point we don't know what to do or how to handle it. And that is hard. But folks, I believe David understood that. He said, when my heart is overwhelmed.

When my heart is overwhelmed. That is the condition that David was in and the condition that we find ourselves in at time. But now we start into what David requested at that time. And this is important for us to understand because I hope we have the same request when we find ourselves in that valley. We have the same request that David asks. Look what he says. He begins by saying, let me find the right verse.

[18:54] When my heart is overwhelmed, what's the first thing he says? Lead me. That's the first two words, isn't it? Lead me. He is asking for God to lead him. Why do you think he's asking for that?

Because he can't figure it out for himself. We need someone to lead us when we don't know where we're going. Isn't that the truth? You know, if we're in an area we have no idea about, we've never been there before, you sometimes need what we call a guide, right? To show us the right path, to show us the way out, to show us what turns to take. That is what a guide does because we know

we can't lead ourselves. Guess what? As we go through life, have you been through life before? Anybody else been here before? No, none of you are reincarnated. That doesn't happen. We have not been through life before.

Am I right? So how foolish is it of us to think that we automatically know the way? That is us being overconfident. Do we understand that? I know. We can all be overconfident at times, right? I mean, Tammy, it wouldn't surprise you at all if I said, I don't need a guide. I can figure it out. Wouldn't surprise you a bit, would it? Is that wise? I'll let you answer that.

No, he's not in a false before. It's not wise because I'm just going to get us lost because I don't know where I'm going. I can fake it, but that's not going to end up in the right destination. David is saying, lead me because he understands that he needs a guide and we need to come to that same understanding that we need someone to lead us. We cannot do it on our own. We haven't been here before. We haven't been through it before. So lead me is the first thing he says, and that means letting go. Leading, asking God to lead, that means we let go of determining where we're going and we follow, that we follow God.

That is a lesson that we should have learned way back in kindergarten when we played the game, follow the leader, right? Somehow, sometimes we forget that lesson and we don't follow the leader. [20:58] We strike off on our own way. Lead me means that we are giving up. We are letting go. We are letting God lead us. He says, lead me. Look at the next portion that he asks. Lead me.

Lead me to the rock. To the rock. What is significant about asking to be led to the rock? It's our firm foundation. A rock is something solid. A rock is something that's not going to just shift and move out from under you. A rock is something that you can cling to. He says, lead me to the rock.

Something that is stable. When we're in the valley, how many things seem stable in our lives? They don't because things are changing. It may be losing a loved one. It may be our health changing.

It may be our finances, but things don't seem stable. David is saying, lead me, but lead me to the rock. Something that is firm, something that I can hang on to that's not going to shift again because we have enough of that in life. Lead me to the rock. And then the last part that he adds on to this, I think is beautiful. I think it is a beautiful reminder. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

Folks, don't dismiss that part of this verse because I think it is so important that we understand that. The rock that is higher than I. Why is it important that it is a rock that is higher than I?

[22:26] A couple things. Higher than I means it's more than just myself because I've already realized I am not enough. I have already realized I do not have enough strength. I do not have enough wisdom.

I do not have enough within me to make it out of this situation. So lead me to the rock that is more than me, that is higher than I. And the other part of that, I think, is something somebody already said. Higher than I, that means if you get on a rock higher than I, you're going to have a better view, aren't you?

I'll give you a little piece of advice here. This is just a piece of advice. If you're ever lost in the woods, where do you want to go? If you're able, climb a tree, but you want to go to the highest place around, don't you? Why? So you see where you're going. If you're in a mountainous area, you want to get on the top of a mountain so you can look around. Oh, there's the town. There's the road. I need to go that way. You want to get to the highest place that you can so you can see where you're going. Folks, that's not a coincidence that David says, lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

And who is the rock that is higher than I? Let's make this clear. It's the Lord, Jesus. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. Because when we get there, when God becomes involved, guess what? Our view changes, doesn't it? Instead of being in the valley where we don't see where to go, all of a sudden, God gives us a different perspective to where all of a sudden now it's not hopeless because we see where we need to go. We begin to see a way out of the situation that we're in. It puts that situation in perspective. God gives us a view of eternity and all of a sudden this little temporary problem we got is not a big deal. And I'm not trying to diminish the things that we go through because they can be hard, but we have to realize they are temporary.

We need to understand that. It is hard for us to wrap our minds around that. It is like a young child. Sometimes they will throw a fit or they'll cry over something that to us is no big deal, right?

[24:37] They cry because they don't get their favorite toy right now when they want it. And what do you think in your mind? That is silly. It's

just a toy, right? To them, that is everything in that moment.

And they're upset about it, but you know better. You know this will pass. Do you think God understands that same concept for us? We get so concerned about things in this earth, in this life that we go through, loss of finances, loss of health, loss of whatever difficulties that we face. And God looks down and He's like, you know, there's a bigger plan than that. You know, that's just temporary.

God helps us to understand that. And it can be the biggest thing that you can imagine. And I know we talked this morning in our prayer time, even about people that are battling with cancer. Is that a big deal?

Sure it is. Absolutely. It is a big deal. But you know what it doesn't need to be? Overwhelming. It does not need to be overwhelming. When we call out to the rock that is higher than I, God gives us that different perspective. God gives us that perspective of, yes, it is difficult, but I've got something great for you. My plan for you goes far beyond the sickness you may be dealing with right now. My plan for you extends for all eternity. Should that change our perspective?

Should that change our perspective? Yes. God's Word, everything He tells us should change our perspective. Because our perspective as believers and as Christians should be, guess what?

[26:12] We're all going to die. Oh, that's not encouraging. It's reality, isn't it? There's only one other alternative, and that's maybe Christ will come back before our physical days end. I mean, that's the alternative. But unless Christ returns, what is going to happen to all of us? A hundred years from now, unless Christ returns, which one of us is going to be sitting in here right now?

I don't know. Maybe Sophie or Lillian or one of the really young ones, maybe they could be like a hundred and one and be sitting in here. What about the rest of us? I hate to say, you don't have a chance.

And neither do I. Because our lives are temporary. Folks, God's perspective, He wants us to understand that. Not just our lives as being temporary, but our problems are temporary, our difficulties, our challenges. They are all temporary. There's a saying that's not necessarily in God's Word, but it's said that Solomon was the one that originally said it, this too shall pass. And the concept of that is certainly in God's Word. The understanding that whatever we face is not, it's temporary. It will pass.

You know, I think, and Travis, I'm just going to use your situation for a minute. Is that all right? He had the situation with his home and the electrical problem and surge that he had that could have burned his house down. That was a problem at the time. Still a problem? Not now. Why?

Yeah. It passed, didn't it? This too shall pass. Refrigerator. Quit working because of the power surge. Still a problem or did you get a new one? Got a new one. Still a problem now? Nope.

Passed, didn't it? This too shall pass. The struggles, the trials. For David, he said it was overwhelming, but he said, lead me to a rock that is higher than I. Give me your perspective. And then I know our time's getting away, but look at what he says after this in some of these verses.

[28:27] For you have been, in verse 3, he's talking about what God has been. He's being reminded what God has done in the past. Have been is past tense. You have been a shelter for me and a strong tower from the enemy. I'm remembering, God, that you've been faithful in the past. That means I can know you're going to be faithful in this situation. That should be encouraging and give us that different perspective.

I will abide in your tabernacle forever. I will trust in the cover of your wings. Being in God's tabernacle means you're in his presence. Being covered by his wings means, guess what? You're in the presence of God. Are you and I in the presence of God right now? As you go through your life, as these trials and struggles and the things that seem overwhelming, as you face those, are you still in the presence of God? Yes. If you are one of his, you are in his presence.

That should be reassuring, shouldn't it? To know that we don't face any of these things alone.

That our Father is with us. For you, O God, in verse 5, have heard my vows. You have given me the heritage of those that fear your name. And then I want to jump down to verse 8. This is a conclusion of this psalm. So will I sing praise to your name forever that I may daily perform my vows.

So he's gone from feeling overwhelmed to saying, I'm going to sing praise to you. That's a shift in perspective, isn't it? That's the same shift in perspective that God wants us to have.

[30:11] When you feel overwhelmed, when you find yourself in that valley, offer up, cry out to God and offer up the same prayer David did. Lead me to a rock that is higher than I. God, change my perspective.

Help me to see things not through my limited eyes, but through your eternal eyes. Help me to see things, God, from your perspective, not my limited one. And I believe if we do that, God will hear our prayers and answer them. And in the end, we will say, I will sing praise to your name, God. I understand.

I get it now. I believe He will help to change our perspective and we will not be lost in the valley. We will be standing on a rock that is higher than I. God will give us this perspective that He wants us to have. This, folks, is a... I look at this chapter as a life lesson, how to handle challenges that come. And here's the reality. I would love to tell you, maybe you're in one of these trials or overwhelming situations right now in your life. I don't know. If you're not, I would like to tell you, you won't be in the future, but that would not be true, would it? All of us will have trials. We will have difficulties that seem overwhelming. When that happens, remember this chapter. Remember to cry out to God and ask Him to lift you up and put you on a rock that is higher, the rock of Jesus that changes our perspective. Let's pray. Lord God, I thank You for Your Word. Lord, You know what we need because You created it. You know the challenges that we face on this earth. You know the trials, the burdens that we have. But Lord, You give us the solutions so we don't have to be overwhelmed. Lord, You can change our perspective and help us to see things more clearly. You can give us hope. But that comes by letting go. It comes by gaining the perspective that You want us to have.

[32:16] So Lord, I pray when we face these challenges that we do cry out to You, that we just cry out that You will lead us, that You will put us on a rock that is higher than I. You will change our perspective and help us to look through Your eyes and not ours. So Lord, I pray that this is accomplished in each one of our lives. And when we run into others that are facing trials, help us to share this with them as well. This is Your desire. This is Your solution for us. Help us to cling to it and help us to cling to You.

Amen. In the name of Jesus, we pray. And all God's family said, Amen.