

# I Trust in Your Unfailing Love

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ] If you have your Bibles with you, please open them up to Psalm chapter 52. Psalm chapter 52. It was about 3.30 last Tuesday when Jen and I were traveling home.
- We were driving with the kids on the highway, Highway 9. And when all of a sudden we saw, not too far ahead of us, some dark, black smoke billowing up into the air.
- And as we got a little bit closer, we could see that it was coming from right on the highway. There had been multiple vehicles that were in an accident, and some of them were on fire.
- We had just passed through the hamlet of Chinook. And as we got even closer, it was right in the middle of the road, and so we had to pull off onto one of the range roads.
- And from there, we saw a little more of what was going on. Semi-truck with some tanker trailers of some kind of flammable substance had caught fire.
- [ 1 : 2 0 ] There were people just in the ditch nearby that had fled their vehicles as the fire was beginning to spread. One of the tankers, I noticed, had not yet caught fire or exploded.
- And all of a sudden, the realization that this is dangerous for these people who are nearby kind of hit. And I kind of went out into the field a little bit to see if I could help kind of get these people to come back and to put some distance between them and what was happening there on the road.
- And even in that moment, I felt unsure of what to do as some of these people didn't want to leave. At least one of them knew that there was someone, a man, still in one of the vehicles, trapped, unable to get free.
- I saw a woman lying lifeless on the ground and her family dragging her away from the fire as it spread. And we watched in horror as one by one, the vehicles all around caught fire, exploding into flames.
- And it was a horrific thing to witness. Three people died that day. Several were critically injured and others with less severe injuries.
- [ 2 : 4 3 ] But it hit home to me. Just that these three people were gone. Just snuffed right out in that moment.
- And their families permanently altered. That day and since that day, I've kind of gone through the full range of emotions from just sadness and grief to frustration and anger at the driver who was responsible for this.
- I've questioned in my own heart, God, why did you allow this to happen? Where are you in the midst of this? I imagine it's not all that different from how David was feeling in the situation that he's in as he writes this psalm, which we're going to read this morning.
- If you look at the superscription, it says, On the surface level, there doesn't seem to be much to those words.
- But these are the words which point back to a great tragedy that happened in the life of David. As the story goes, David was the young shepherd that God had anointed to be the next king of Israel.

[ 4 : 23 ] Everything was going well for him. He defeated Goliath. He came into the service of the king in his palace. He came to serve in the army of Israel.

He rose up in the ranks of the army until he was in leadership. He was best friends with the king's son. The people loved David because of the success that God gave him in battle.

He even married into the royal family. He was the king's son-in-law. Everything was going well for David until things began to fall apart. God had told King Saul that he was going to take the kingdom away from Saul and give it to someone better than him because he had disobeyed God to his neighbor.

And so Saul was watching over his throne, his rule, with a jealous and suspicious eye. And he came to see that David was the one that God was moving in to replace him.

His suspicion and his jealousy became pointed at David. And it got to the place where Saul, in his obsession to maintain his power and his kingdom, attempted to take David's life several times.

[ 5 : 45 ] In the midst of all this, David was trying to figure out what to do and it got to the place where he realized, I just have to run. I have to leave.

I can't stay here anymore. It's not safe. And so he fled for his life. He left everything behind. He left his wife. He left his family. He left his possessions with nothing but the shirt on his back.

He hit the road and he ran. The first stop was to Samuel, the Lord's prophet in Ramah. But it wasn't long before Saul realized that he was there and started to come after him there.

So after a meetup with Jonathan, he then fled to the town of Nob. Nob was a small town where the tabernacle was set up, where the priests served in the ministry of the tabernacle.

And David went there to, and he met up with a man named Ahimelech. Ahimelech was a priest who served at the tabernacle. Out of desperation, David lied to Ahimelech.

[ 6 : 55 ] Ahimelech. He told him that he was on a secret mission from the king. And he asked Ahimelech to give him some provisions, some bread. He also asked him for a sword.

Of course, David knew that the sword of Goliath was there. That's where it was being kept. And so Ahimelech helped David out that day. He gave him some provisions.

He gave him the sword of Goliath. But there was one problem. There was a man there that day named Doeg the Edomite. He was a servant of Saul, Saul's chief shepherd.

And he witnessed this exchange between Ahimelech and David. And so now, as David has continued on the run, he's gone into Philistine country, he was captured there, he escaped, he's back in Israel.

And Saul's obsession with taking him out begins to rise again when he gets word that David is out by the cave of Adullam. On one day, Saul has what I'm going to call a bit of a temper tantrum.

[ 8 : 10 ] And he starts accusing all of his servants of conspiring against him, of supporting David. David. And it's at that moment that Doeg sees an opportunity and makes his move.

Actually, your majesty, King Saul, not everyone has conspired against you. I have been loyal to you.

In fact, I have some information that might be helpful to you. I saw David go to the house of Ahimelech. And Ahimelech gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath.

When Saul heard this report from Doeg, he summoned Ahimelech and his family from Nob. He interrogated them.

Even though Ahimelech pleaded innocent and ignorant to this situation that was going on between Saul and David, Saul decided to order to have Ahimelech and his whole family executed.

[ 9 : 27 ] Saul's officials were unwilling to lay their hands on the priests of the Lord. So Saul turns to Doeg and says, you, strike them down.

And that day, Doeg did that. He struck down Ahimelech and his whole family. The record in the scriptures tells us that 85 men who served at the tabernacle were struck down that day.

And then Doeg went one step further. He went to the town of Nob and he put the entire town to the sword. Not just the men but the women and even the children as well.

Only one person escaped. His name was Abiathar. He was the son of Ahimelech and he managed to get away and fled to where David was.

He told David what Saul and Doeg had done. and David said this to him. That day when Doeg the Edomite was there I knew he would be sure to tell Saul.

[ 10 : 43 ] I am responsible for the death of your whole family. Stay with me. Don't be afraid. The man who wants to kill you is trying to kill me too.

You will be safe with me. It's at or about this time that David pens the words of Psalm 52.

Let me read it for you. Why do you boast of evil you mighty hero? Why do you boast all day long you who are a disgrace in the eyes of God?

You who practice deceit. Your tongue plots destruction. It's like a sharpened razor. You love evil rather than good.

Falsehood rather than speaking the truth. you love every harmful word you deceitful tongue. Surely God will bring you down to everlasting ruin.

[ 11 : 51 ] He will snatch you up and pluck you from your tent. He will uproot you from the land of the living. The righteous will see and fear.

They will laugh at you saying here now is the man who did not make God his stronghold but trusted in his great wealth and grew strong by destroying others.

But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God. I trust in God's unfailing love forever and ever.

For what you have done I will always praise you in the presence of your faithful people and I will hope in your name for your name is good.

Now these are probably not all of the things that David had to say about Doeg and that whole situation. It probably doesn't represent everything that David has felt about this tragedy that has taken place.

[ 12 : 55 ] if we just go back to for a moment to his own admission where he said I am responsible for the death of your whole family. We can draw from that that David has already been through the full range of emotions here.

He has felt sadness and grief at the tragedy that has occurred. He has felt guilt. He has blamed himself for what has happened.

He has probably felt anger and frustration towards Doeg, towards Saul, and yet powerlessness to do anything about this.

While here he is out in the edge of the desert hill country in a cave with a few guys, he's probably felt fear.

if that's what Saul will do to a Himalek for the one day I stopped by and asked for some help, what will he do to me and to others I care about if he gets a hold of us, if he finds us?

- [ 14 : 12 ] At some point in David's wrestling through all of this, he comes to the place where he pens Psalm 52. this psalm is unlike many of David's other psalms.
- His other psalms often begin with him addressing God or addressing the person that he's writing to. But here he begins with a question addressed to his enemy.
- He says, why do you boast of evil, you mighty hero? we're kind of left to wonder just who he's referring to. Is he talking about Doeg?
- Is he talking about Saul? Does he leave it purposely ambiguous to include both and maybe any others who have banded together against him or participated in this slaughter?
- Interesting way to begin a song with a question to your enemy. Why do you boast of evil, you mighty hero? It's not a question that David's enemy can answer.
- [ 15 : 31 ] Or is David looking for an answer? Perhaps David is making a statement, more of a rhetorical question. Why do you boast of evil, you mighty hero?
- In other words, you think yourself a hero, you think yourself a mighty man because of your accomplishments, because of the things that you have done, which are evil, but you shouldn't.
- You're a fool to congratulate yourself, to be proud of what you have done, because what you have done is evil. verse 2, he goes on to describe the kinds of things that his enemy has done.
- He says, practicing deceit, plotting destruction. He says, your values, they're completely backwards to what they should be.
- You love evil rather than good. You love falsehood rather than speaking the truth. You love every harmful word, words that are hurtful to others, literally, words that devour others.
- [ 16 : 51 ] You deceitful tongue. Again, we probably see that the description here fits both Doeg and Saul and perhaps others.
- Saul has been the source, of the lies that have been spread about David, of the plans and the plots for David's destruction.
- But Doeg also falls under these words as well. If anybody has loved evil, it's him. Not only is he willing to earn favor with the king by tattling on David, knowing that it will probably get Ahimelech and his family into trouble, but then he goes so far as to execute the king's orders and slaughter all of these innocent people.
- You love evil rather than good. You boast of what your hands have done for you.
- You think yourself a hero, a champion, God's going to pluck you from your tent.
- [ 18 : 28 ] He will uproot you from the land of the living. You boast right now. You think you've gotten away with this. Nobody can touch you because you're on the side of power.
- But you're wrong. God will see that justice is done. God himself will make things right. God himself will come and bring you down.
- And when he does, it will be permanent. It will be forever, everlasting, something you will not rise up from. David says he will snatch you up and pluck you from your tent.
- The picture there is of God's hand reaching in and grabbing Doeg right out of his house, his tent, the place that he lives. He says he will uproot you from the land of the living.
- You may think that you're well-rooted now, that you're secure in this position that you have earned for yourself through deceit and through evil.
- [ 19 : 46 ] But God will rip you out, roots and all, right out of the land of the living. And it'll be the end for you. God will see that justice is done.

And he will make things right, says David. And when he does, verse 6, the righteous will see and fear.

They will take notice of how God has dealt with Doeg and how God has dealt with Saul. And they will think to themselves twice when they are considering doing what is wrong, what is evil.

It will strike a reverence into their hearts. Not only that, they will move from fear, it says, to laughter. The righteous will see in fear.

They will laugh at you, saying, here now is the man who did not make God his stronghold, but trusted in his great wealth and grew strong by destroying others. Now, if we look at other scriptures, this is, I'm not sure exactly how to take this myself, but probably not an endorsement of how we should gloat over other people when they face justice.

[ 21 : 14 ] I don't think it means that kind of laughing. But God's people will, in the end, they will say to those who have lived as Doeg and Saul did, here now is the man who did not make God his stronghold, but trusted in his great wealth and mighty strength.

The utter foolishness of what they have done will be so apparent, it will be so obvious, it will be laughable. You put all of your eggs in that basket, and yet that's completely powerless to save you from the good and right justice of God when it comes.

From David's perspective, he now kind of turns and shifts from talking to his enemy to now talking a little bit about himself.

From David's perspective, in his situation, Saul and Doeg are still in power. these men who have mercilessly massacred all these innocent people.

And yet David says this, he says, but I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God. When I first read that, I thought, I don't really get that.

[ 23 : 01 ] Olive tree is not really the most relatable thing for me. But the more I meditated on this, the more I began to see just how beautiful these words are.

Here David is, on the outskirts of the desert hill country, a fugitive, hiding in caves, fearing for his life.

Meanwhile, these tyrants are running the show. And he says, but I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God.

I'm like a house plant, like a tree that's inside God's own house. And I'm flourishing.

I'm green. Because God himself is watching over me, is tending to me, is caring for me. David says, I trust in God's unfailing love.

[ 24 : 08 ] Forever and ever. You want to know what's carrying me through the storms of this situation? Through the tragedy that I've witnessed and even been a part of?

God's unfailing love. I'm trusting in that. I'm leaning on that. I'm depending on that. And not just today, but always.

Forever I will. Because that's the kind of love that he has for his people. It's faithful love. It's unfailing love. Covenant love.

The love that makes promises and keeps them. One hundred percent. He goes on in verse nine. He says, for what you have done, I will always praise you in the presence of your faithful people.

He pledges not just the worship of today, but even the worship of his tomorrow to the Lord. For what you have done, I will always praise you.

[ 25 : 15 ] The things that you have done, Lord, in the past, the things you will yet do in this situation, I will look back on them and I will praise you for them because they are good.

They are right. They always have been and they always will be. And so you have my worship, Lord. At the end of verse nine, he says, I will hope in your name for your name is good.

The word hope there literally means wait upon. I will wait upon your name. David's situation hasn't changed.

He's still skulking about in the desert, afraid for his life. Doeg and Saul are still in power at the helm of the ship in Israel.

What's David going to do about it? I will wait upon your name. I'm waiting for you, Lord, to come and make things right, to come and deal with these guys.

[ 26 : 32 ] For your name is good and you will, you will do good in this situation. you will bring good from it.

Now this situation in David's life might feel a little hard for us to relate to. None of us have been in a situation like this. But what does the Lord have to say to us through these words?

our situation may not be the same, but some of us, if we're honest, are in a situation.

A situation that's not going the way that we want it to. A situation in which we maybe have already gone through the full range of emotions or are going through them right now.

A situation perhaps in which we feel like we're powerless to do anything about it. David encourages us in the midst of these kinds of situations to turn our eyes to heaven, to the Lord, to Jesus, to put our trust in him, in his unfailing love, in his tender, loving care.

[ 28 : 04 ] For those of us who are in Christ, we can say, with David, but I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God.

Even while we walk through the desert, even while we sleep in the darkness of the cave, because God takes care of his people.

And even though things might not look good in the situation that we're in, God will make things right. He always does for his people.

He always will. If there's one thing that we learn from David in this psalm, it's that we should look ahead. Many times in this short little psalm, David uses the word will.

He will. God will. I will. He encourages us to look ahead to the future.

[ 29 : 20 ] The bigger picture. as we look around, see the world around us, look at our government, we look at all kinds of things, we look at what people are doing, we may see all kinds of things that we would say are evil, are wrong.

We may see those people, some people using their position, their power, to bring about things at the expense of others. But take heart, God will make things right.

We may look at the political landscape and see how things are changing there and how some are pushing for their agenda and trying to bring about things that are really going to be damaging for some or for others, for many.

but take heart, God will make things right. I want to end this message with the ultimate restatement of this psalm which comes through the Apostle Paul in his letter to the church at Rome.

this is the confidence that we can have, those of us who are in Christ as we look ahead, nothing can separate us from the unfailing love of God.

[ 30 : 59 ] Let me read it for you from Romans chapter 8. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him who have been called according to his purpose.

For those God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

and those he predestined he also called. Those he called he also justified. Those he justified he also glorified.

What then shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also along with him graciously give us all things?

Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns?

[ 32 : 20 ] No one, Christ Jesus who died, more than that, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

And so who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword for Ahimelech and his family?

No. In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And so with whatever situation you find yourself in today, this week, let us trust in the unfailing love of the Lord.

Lord, he will make things right as we wait on him. Let's pray. Father, you know the darkness and the difficulty of some of the things that we're going through.

[ 34 : 08 ] And while we don't see clearly or understand your purpose why you allow some of these things to happen, we choose today to trust in your unfailing love.

We choose today to say with David, I am like an olive tree, flourishing in your house. You take such good care of us.

And we love you. in Christ's name we pray. Amen. Will you join with me in our final hymn? How great is our God? Please stand if you're able.