

When Things Fall Apart

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[0 : 00] We're starting our new series this morning. The series is titled Man on the Run, and we're going to be looking at a number of the psalms, songs or prayers that David wrote while he was on the run from King Saul.

The first of which is Psalm 59, which we'll be looking at this morning. And before we dive into this psalm, this psalm was written at a very specific time in David's life.

It says right at the beginning that this psalm is about when Saul had sent men to watch David's house in order to kill him. So he probably didn't write it at that moment, but he wrote it about that time or shortly after.

And before we jump into it, I just want to remind us of what's going on in the story of David and Saul up to this point. So if you remember, Saul was Israel's first king.

And because Saul was disobedient to the Lord's command, the Lord told Saul that he was rejected as king of Israel and that the kingdom would be taken from him and from his family and given to someone else.

[1 : 19] And of course, that someone else was David, the young man, the shepherd from Bethlehem. And David was anointed by Samuel, the Lord's prophet, to be the next king of Israel.

He came and fought Goliath. The Lord gave him victory over Goliath. He ended up in service in the king's palace. He was the musician that was sought to help Saul when he got into his moods.

And everything that seemed to happen to David from the time that he was anointed until we find him today just seemed to be an incredible working of God.

He had success in battle. He was taken into the military. He rose up in the ranks to the point where he became a leader in the army. And no matter what battle it was, it seemed the Lord gave him success in everything that he did.

He was growing in favor with the people. The people loved David. He even had the opportunity to become the king's son-in-law and married into the royal family.

[2 : 32] He was best friends with Jonathan, the king's son. And as far as David could see, everything is going well.

He's been told that he would be the next king of Israel. And if you look at the trajectory of his life, what a transition. I mean, he may have wondered, how am I going to go from being a shepherd boy in my father's house to being a king?

And here the Lord has caused everything to fall into place. One thing after another to the point where he is where he is today. But there's a problem.

Saul doesn't see this kingdom as God's kingdom. He sees it as his own. And he does not want to let go of his rule, of his throne.

He is bent on hanging on to it right to the bitter end, even though God has made it clear that he has been rejected as king. Saul knows that the kingdom will be given to someone else.

[3 : 41] The Lord has told him that through Samuel. And so he's on the lookout for anybody who would try to usurp or take his throne. He wants his throne when he dies to go to his son, Jonathan.

And as David is seemingly rising up in the ranks and the people are coming to love him, Saul realizes that this is the man that God has chosen to replace him as the king of Israel.

And he begins to become angry towards David and see him as a threat to his rule. It says that he was afraid of him to the point where he becomes ready to take David's life.

He tries to kill David one time when they're alone, just he and David and David's playing music. He tries to hurl his spear and kill him. But David escapes.

Then he tries to do it through more indirect means, using the military when they're out in battle, hoping to tweak things a little bit so that David will fall in battle.

[4 : 51] But it doesn't work. The Lord gives him victory anyway. Then he tries to get to him through his daughter. Maybe she will distract him and love will get him off his game and he'll fall in battle.

But David's not interested. And then when he finally is interested in marrying one of Saul's daughters, it's another of Saul's daughters. And Saul thinks, this is the time. The bride price, 200 Philistines.

You have to kill them. Hoping that David would fall in battle. But of course, the Lord gives David success. And he's able to pay the bride price in full.

And becomes the king's son-in-law. No matter what Saul tries, it seems pretty clear that the Lord is thwarting his attempt to take David out.

He has rejected Saul. And he is with David, his chosen king. The tensions are rising between David and Saul. And finally things come to a head.

[5 : 58] Again, in a moment when they're alone, Saul decides to try to make another try and pin him to the wall with his spear. And David just escapes.

And he runs to his home and to his wife, Michal. And you can imagine this. Here they are. They're in his, David's in his home with his wife.

They're talking. He's probably expressing like, what's going on here? He just tried to kill me again. You know, what? Is he just an angry and violent guy?

Or has he got an issue with me specifically? Is he after me? And then all of a sudden, he looks out the window. And he notices that there's some guys that are watching the house.

Saul had sent men to watch the house with orders to kill David in the morning. How is David feeling in the midst of all this?

[7 : 02] What's he thinking about? Well, thankfully, this psalm is all about that. And we get a beautiful picture of exactly what kind of things David is thinking and feeling.

Let me read it for you. Deliver me from my enemies, O God. Be my fortress against those who are attacking me.

Deliver me from evildoers. And save me from those who are after my blood. See how they lie in wait for me. Fierce men conspire against me for no offense or sin of mine, Lord.

I have done no wrong. Yet they are ready to attack me. Arise to help me. Look on my plight.

You, Lord, God Almighty. You who are the God of Israel. Rouse yourself to punish all the nations. Show no mercy to wicked traitors.

[8 : 08] They return at evening, snarling like dogs. And prowl about the city. See what they spew from their mouths.

The words from their lips are sharp as swords. And they think, who can hear us? But you laugh at them, Lord.

You scoff at all those nations. You are my strength. I watch for you. You, God, are my fortress.

My God on whom I can rely. God will go before me. And will let me gloat over those who slander me. Down to verse 14. They return at evening, snarling like dogs.

And prowl about the city. They wander about for food and howl if not satisfied. But I will sing of your strength. In the morning, I will sing of your love.

[9 : 13] For you are my fortress. My refuge in times of trouble. You are my strength. I sing praise to you. You, God, are my fortress.

My God on whom I can rely. David knows that he's in big trouble. He describes his troubles throughout the psalm.

More at the beginning. In verse 1, he says, Verse 2, Verse 4, Verse 4, They're ready to attack me.

They're like dogs prowling about the city, looking for their prey. And the words, the things that they're saying are sharp and deadly.

They slander me. They're spreading lies about me. But what's even more difficult about this you can just hear the angst in David's voice.

[10 : 41] Why? Why are they doing this? Why is this happening to me? Verse three, fierce men conspire against me for no offense or sin of mine, Lord.

What have I done that they're hunting me down like this, like a criminal? Verse four, I have done no wrong, yet they are ready to attack me.

Do you hear the angst in David's heart? Why are they doing this? I've done nothing to deserve this. Three times he asks for the Lord to give his attention to his troubles, to the situation that he's in.

In verse three, he says, see how they lie in wait for me. See? Do you see this, Lord? Do you see these guys lurking around outside the house?

In verse four, he says, look on my plight. God, look. Give your attention to my troubles. See them. In verse seven, he says, see what they spew from their mouths.

[12:01] Lord, do you hear the words that they are speaking about me? The lies that they are saying about me? He calls for God to give his attention to his troubles.

But he goes beyond that. Not only does he ask for the Lord's attention, but he asks the Lord to intervene and to do something about his troubles. Right at the beginning in verse one, he says, deliver me from my enemies.

Again, in verse two, deliver me from evildoers and save me from those who are after my blood. He asks God to come and get him out of this situation, to rescue him from these guys.

The second half of verse one, he says, be my fortress against those who are attacking me. I need a safe place to go.

I'm in my own home and I'm not even safe here. God, be my fortress. Protect me. Verse four, he says, arise to help me.

[13:15] Don't just sit and watch as this unfolds. Arise and come and help me. Lord, I'm in trouble. David goes on from there to ask the Lord to come and punish his enemies.

In verse five, rouse yourself to punish. And then again in verses 11 to 13, he goes on to ask God to consume his enemies in his wrath.

We didn't read that part. I'm not going to say a lot about those parts this morning, but I do want to point out that this is not sheerly revenge for David.

This is not just a personal desire for revenge. Notice what he says in verse 13. He says, consume them in your wrath. Consume them till they are no more.

Then it will be known to the ends of the earth that God rules over Jacob. That's almost another way of saying, hallowed be thy name.

[14:23] Consume my enemies in your wrath so that throughout the world, everybody will see that Israel is different, that they have a God who doesn't allow this kind of garbage to go on in his kingdom.

It's a very honoring way to pray to the Lord, an honoring reason to give. And yet, I don't think that we should follow David's example and pray for God to bring judgment on our enemies.

Jesus tells us that we should go beyond the law of justice to the place where we love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us.

So far in this psalm, we've seen how David calls God's attention to his troubles, how David describes his troubles and tells them to God, and how David asks for God to intervene and to do something about his troubles, to get him out of this situation, to help him.

And then we see a shift happen in this psalm as David moves from talking about and describing his troubles to describing his God.

[15:43] The shift begins in verse 5. He says, You, Lord, God Almighty, You who are the God of Israel, You, Lord, Yahweh, God Almighty, literally, God of hosts, or as another translation puts it, God of armies.

God of Israel, it's interesting that David's mind goes to that name of God in this situation. Here he is trembling in his house with his wife while there's men lurking around, watching him, looking for a chance to get him.

Who's going to come to his defense? not the military. He's in the military. Perhaps some of these henchmen are even in the military. Saul probably sent people who could get the job done.

Who's going to come to his defense? The God of heaven's armies. He's the one that these guys are no match for, that Saul is no match for.

In verse 8, the shift happens full strength and everything that follows is describing who God is.

[17:15] And David's expressing his confidence in him. He says, verse 8, back in verse 7, I guess, see what they spew from their mouths, their words from their lips are sharp as swords and they think, who can hear us?

But verse 8, but you laugh at them, Lord. You scoff at all those nations. David widens it to nations. Probably this was adapted later on for use as a song by the whole people of Israel. But you laugh at my enemies, Lord. You scoff at them.

You scoff at them. When David's mind and heart becomes filled with the reality that his God is the God of heaven's armies, the Lord of hosts, things start to take perspective and he sees them for what they really are.

King Saul and his henchmen, you laugh at them, Lord. they're like a guy that's coming towards you with a little stick and you're driving a tank, an armored vehicle.

[18 : 35] They're no match. The whole scenario is laughable that they would try to oppose you. David goes on and he says, you are my strength.

I watch for you. You, God, are my fortress, my stronghold, the place where I am so safe that I can relax, I can rest because they can't get me.

You are my God on whom I can rely. Notice how David has shifted from verse 5. You who are the God of Israel.

now he's saying, you are my God. You are my strength. You are my fortress. My God on whom I can rely.

The end of verse 10. Even though my enemies are spreading lies about me, they're slandering me, I trust that you will go before me and that you will bring about the day when there's a reversal here and I'm able to gloat over them for the terrible things that they're saying about me.

[19 : 55] In the final stanza of the psalm, David continues with just expressing his confidence in God and who he is. He says some of the same things.

He says, you are my fortress, verse 16. He says in verse 17, you are my strength, my God on whom I can rely. But then he adds something new, adds something different.

Verse 16, he says, but I will sing of your strength. In the morning, I will sing of your love.

Verse 17, you are my strength, I sing praise to you. what would you be doing if you were being hunted by someone who was trying to kill you?

I don't know about you, but singing would probably be at the bottom of my list. I'd be, my heart would be racing, I would be fearful, I'd be anxious, I'd be panicked, I'd be wondering what to do, and I'm sure that David was experiencing all of those things too, but he doesn't stay there.

[21 : 10] He goes beyond that as he takes time to call out to God and to think about and express his faith and trust in God and who he knows God to be, he comes to the place where he can sing.

Literally in verse 16, I will sing joyfully of your love is the kind of singing that's referred to there. He comes to the place where he's ready to praise.

It's amazing. The truth that this psalm communicates to us is that God is everything that we need in times of trouble.

He is everything that we need in times of trouble. that's what David has found in the past. That's what he knows is true. That's what he is reassuring himself of.

And that's what we are meant to learn from this. God has given us this psalm as an example of what to do in times of trouble. We may not be, and I hope none of us ever will be, hunted by someone who wants to kill us.

[22 : 29] But this psalm is not really just about that. It's about what do we do in any time of trouble. Look at verse 16 at the very end.

David says, you are my refuge in times of trouble. Or literally in the day of trouble. The sense that we get there is that this is not just the only situation that we should do what David did.

this is how David sees God in all of his times of trouble. As the God who is his help, the God who is his refuge, the God who is whatever he needs in that situation, who takes care of him, who watches over him.

And so the question that I want to ask you this morning is what kind of troubles are you facing right now? What kind of troubles have you got in your life?

Financial troubles? Troubles with the crops? Troubles with relationships? Troubles with your spouse?

[23 : 49] Troubles with your children? Troubles with your parents? Troubles with your parents? Troubles with your parents? What kind of troubles have you got in your life?

Troubles with your health? Sickness? But the question that this psalm really asks us is what are you going to do about your troubles?

What have you been doing about your troubles? people? Most of us in this room think we are pretty good. We do well when it comes to telling God that we are in trouble and asking for his help.

But the thing that I was really challenged with in this psalm is that we need to move beyond that to that place of expressing our faith in God and who he is.

We need to move beyond just telling and asking to that place where we ask, Lord, what can you do in this situation?

[24 : 57] Who are you? And what about you makes all the difference in my specific troubles? And sometimes that's hard to do in prayer.

We're so bogged down and weighed down by them and this week I was thinking just I tried it myself and it's really helpful. A simple way to do this get alone with the Lord, piece of paper and a pen, put a line down the middle of the paper on one side write my troubles and list them out and on the other side write my God and think about what you know about God open the Bible pray until you come to that place where your heart is at peace that place where you're ready to sing joyfully to praise the Lord because he is everything we need in our times of trouble and more he is mighty to save there's no situation that's too difficult for him this entire psalm almost can be summed up in the words of Asaph in Psalm 50 verse 15 I've been thinking about that verse a lot this week it says simply this call on me in the day of trouble I will deliver you and you will honor me that's God's invitation here call on me with the troubles in your life I will deliver you and you will honor me you will sing joyfully to me you will praise me but what's amazing is that at this point in David's life this is just the beginning of his troubles this is just the beginning of things falling apart but we don't have to wait until the help arrives the solution gets there before we can rest before we can trust before we can sing joyfully and praise David shows us through his example that that's possible by faith even in the midst of the greatest of troubles

God is everything we need in our time of trouble and he is mighty to save let's pray father in heaven thank you so much for these words and we admit and confess right now that we often do poorly at this we get into the moment of trouble and we turn to everything but you and when we finally do turn to you we we just want your help we often just wallow in it forgive us lord for that teach us to do like David did and to find strength in you remind us of who you are that makes all the difference in each of our specific situations and troubles that we're facing lord you know exactly what they are bring that word of encouragement and hope to us that will make all the difference lord we don't want to be taken down by discouragement we don't want to be people who fret and worry about all kinds of things as if we had no god you are our god so teach us to follow this example of David we ask this in christ's name amen