

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

717 North Stapley Drive, Mesa, AZ 85203 Phone: (480) 833-7500

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| Series: | The Psalms | | Pastor/Teacher |
| Number: | 2 | | Mason Depew |
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Shelter From the Storm

Introduction: Nearly every human culture has its war heroes. The Romans had Horatius and Julius Caesar, and we have had Alvin York and Audie Murphy, among many others. The image of a courageous soldier willing to sacrifice everything for his people, and triumphing through cleverness or sheer willpower, is deeply inspiring to many, and can make even a grown man weep. Not long before this psalm was written, the people of Israel considered David such an inspiring war hero.¹ This is why King Saul envied David and saw him as a threat, eventually driving him to hide in caves as David did when he wrote this psalm. But did David consider himself a war hero? Did he boast about all the Philistines he had slain? Did he even boast about slaying Goliath, his most famous victory?

1. In one of the lowest moments of David's life, he didn't look to his past accomplishments or even the dark cave he was hiding in for encouragement.
 - a. A cave may have looked like safety to most, but it could also have turned out to be a trap, leaving David cornered if Saul saw him.
 - b. Instead, David took refuge from his pursuer in God's grace. - 57:1-3
 - i. Before even beginning to describe his dire situation, David very deliberately spends time in worship, praise, and adoration.
 - ii. The language of destruction passing over like a raging storm in verse 1 is strongly reminiscent of the Passover. Just as the lamb's blood covered the Hebrew families in their homes, God's grace covers David in the cave.
 - c. David is certain that God has a purpose for him and will fulfill it. - 57:2
 - d. David is certain that God will save him and bring justice down. - 57:3
 - i. Because of these verses and the tone of the psalm overall, psalm 57 is often classified as a psalm of thanksgiving, which is remarkable considering David's circumstances. You wouldn't think David had much to be thankful for at this time!

¹ See 1 Samuel 18:6-9. "As they were coming home, when David returned from striking down the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical instruments. And the women sang to one another as they celebrated, 'Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands.' And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, 'They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?' And Saul eyed David from that day on."

2. In verses 4 and 6, David describes his crisis situation interlaced with still more praise for the God who will surely save him.
 - a. David compares his enemies to ravenous beasts who would consume his flesh in verse 4.²
 - i. David doesn't downplay his enemy's ability to hurt him, as people often do to encourage themselves.
 - ii. The terrifying power of David's enemies to destroy him makes God's glorious rescue all the more wonderful!
 - iii. Notice that he emphasizes the teeth and tongue of his enemies, meaning their cruel words, bringing humiliation and slander are in some ways as harmful as real weapons.³
 - b. In the midst of his dire situation with foes all around, David cries out in verse 5.
 - i. His cry is not one of despair, or blaming God, or even a request, but worship.
 - ii. David's cry is perfectly appropriate, though counterintuitive to us, because God repeatedly declares in the Old Testament that he saves his people for the sake of his own glory.⁴
 - iii. David knows that God's being glorified among the whole earth *necessarily requires* God to keep his promises and save his people.
 - c. David returns in verse 6 to briefly describe his crisis of persecution as a trap laid for him which will spring back on his foes.
 - i. Notice the vast contrast between David's soul, which is bowed down, with God's glory, which is exalted over all the earth. This makes it abundantly clear that David is not the hero of his own story. God is.
 - ii. Sooner or later, all such traps spring back on the wicked, since God's perfect justice will ultimately pay back all sins.
 - iii. Notice that David is not the one who takes revenge.⁵

3. In verses 7-11, David returns to a final, glorious exaltation of God's great majesty.

² Some critics have said that this verse doesn't belong with the tone of the rest of the psalm because it expresses despair. They miss the poetic power of the contrast entirely.

³ Thus Calvin's commentary on this verse: "In what he says of their tongue, he alludes to the virulent calumnies which are vended by the wicked, and which inflict a deeper wound than any sword upon the innocent part who suffers from them."

⁴ For a few examples, see Joshua 7:9; Psalm 23:3, 25:11; Isaiah 48:9, 11; Jeremiah 14:7, 21; Daniel 9:19.

⁵ Compare with 1 Samuel 24:9-12.

- a. Verse 7 emphasizes that he is especially ready now to give his all to worship.
 - i. His heart is fully in it, and this is no wonder considering what he has already said. The more you have the kind of confidence David has expressed in God's deliverance, the more your heart will be invested in true spiritual worship.
 - ii. This verse is almost like taking a breath before he really belts it out with everything he has in the final few verses.
 - b. Verses 8-10 give us the most dramatic imagery of hope in the psalm. With David's singing a new day will rise.
 - i. Dawn and awakening is suggestive of hope and deliverance, in contrast to night, which is associated with misery and hopelessness. Also very appropriate considering David wrote this in a cave.
 - ii. Verse 9 expressed that the scope of David's worship is global, giving thanks for what God has done and giving praise for who he is among all the peoples of the world.
 - iii. Verses 10 and 11 together show that God's attributes are equal to the glory which he deserves. His infinite love and faithfulness deserve unceasing, everlasting worship, and this is exactly what God will have from his people.
4. Psalm 57 forcefully teaches us that even the greatest heroes of the faith are really not the main character of their own story.
- a. David deserves no glory in and of himself, and so we certainly have no room for boasting about ourselves.
 - b. Every spiritual victory in our lives likewise comes from the power of God, so we must give him all praise and gratitude. As Paul says in Romans 11:35-36, "who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen."