
“The Lord Is My Refuge”

PSALM 59

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At A Glance

In 1 Samuel 19, we watch David hunted, betrayed, and hemmed in by Saul’s relentless pursuit. In Psalm 59, we step inside David’s heart as he cries out for deliverance, wrestles with fear, and clings to God as his hiding place. Together, the story and the song remind us that we are not reading myths but the lives of real people who endured real turmoil—just like us.

David’s testimony points us to the same refuge he found: the Lord Himself. From pleading for protection, to trusting God’s justice, to finding strength in weakness, David’s words echo through generations of Christians who have been mocked, maligned, persecuted, and even killed for their faith.

This sermon calls us to anchor our lives in God as our fortress. When storms rage, when injustice prevails, when our strength gives out—His steadfast love holds us fast.

History And Humanity

When I preached 1 Samuel 19:1-17 a few weeks ago I mentioned that I may want to come back and revisit verse 2 and the theme of a hiding place. It is generally thought that David wrote Psalm 59 to describe how he felt during the events described in 1 Samuel 19. In 1 Samuel 19 we watch events unfold; in Psalm 59, we enter David’s heart. The story and the song give us both history and humanity.

It’s a vivid reminder that we’re reading about real people who went through the same emotions, turmoil, and fears as we do. David’s life is not unlike yours and mine. We have a different calling than he, but we’re not immune to similar suffering. Christians throughout the history of the church have known what it felt like to be hunted, targeted, & killed for nothing more than speaking the truth of the gospel.

Christian, do not think that you will be loved by a world that hates God. And do not think that following Christ faithfully will mean you skate through life worry-free. You will find yourself needing a refuge someday. Where will you find it? David found his refuge in the Lord.

Psalm 59:16-17

¹⁶ But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress. ¹⁷ O my Strength, I will sing praises to you, for you, O God, are my fortress, the God who shows me steadfast love.

The Lord is my refuge...

1. ...when I ask Him to [protect me](#).

Psalm 59:1-2 Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; protect me from those who rise up against me; ² deliver me from those who work evil, and save me from bloodthirsty men.

There is nothing wrong with asking God to deliver you. I think this is an important point for us to begin with. It's ok to ask the Lord to protect you from suffering and to relieve your suffering. David asked the Lord four times in these two verses to **deliver**, **protect**, and **save** him.

It's ok to cry out to God to save your life. Even Jesus, knowing full well His purpose was to die on the cross, taking upon Himself the sin of the world, begged God saying, *"Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."* Luke 22:42

And perhaps no mere man suffered more for God than the Apostle Paul. He named his suffering in his letter to the Corinthians. *"Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death."* 2 Corinthians 11:23

Paul was obviously willing to suffer intense persecution for Christ. Yet even he was not afraid or ashamed to ask the Lord to intervene and reduce his suffering. He went on to say, *"a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me."* 2 Corinthians 12:7-8

Three times Paul asked the Lord to intervene, to deal with the thorn in his side. So our first point of application today is that there is nothing wrong with asking the Lord to protect you from suffering or to relieve you from suffering.

Otherwise why would *Psalm 34:17* say, *"When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles."* And why would Jesus say in *Matthew 7:7*, *"Ask, and it will be given to you..."*?

But there's a caveat in both of these – seeking the Lord. To seek the Lord in our times of distress is more than wanting to escape hardship. It's running into His refuge and it's trusting that even if He doesn't answer as we wish, we will agree that He is good.

2. ...because He will [right every wrong](#).

Verse 4 ...for no fault of mine, they run and make ready. Awake, come to meet me, and see!

David had a clear conscience. He could rightly say that he was being pursued unjustly. He had done nothing deserving death. The author of Samuel reiterates that David was no usurper to the throne. He never took action to elevate himself. It was Saul who kept drawing him closer to it.

Still, David was pursued unjustly. So, he prayed in **verse 5 Rouse yourself to punish all the nations; spare none of those who treacherously plot evil.** That's confidence in God's justice. *Romans 12:19* echoes, *"Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."*

But does it sometimes feel as though God is asleep? Do you ever wonder if the only explanation to why God is not moving or intervening in your life is He must not be awake? David felt that way. In his raw, unfiltered writing, he invited the Lord to **awake, come to meet me, and see!** Can you hear the desperation in David's writing? Lord, when will you step in?

You may be going through something: an injustice, a hardship, pursued by people despite your innocence. You may be facing false accusations. Refuge in God may not mean immediate vindication. But it does mean He is going to set all things right one day. Even the martyrs cry out in *Revelation 6:10*, *"O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"*

Our second point of application is that in the end God will right all wrongs. He will deliver true justice. And if it were not for His grace in our lives, we'd get what we deserve, too. Let's never forget that.

3. ...because He laughs at the arrogant.

Remember last week I spoke of the arrogance in the heart of Saul, who I suggest must have thought to himself, "What can God do to me?" After he sent three groups of messengers to bring back David and after each group was overcome by the Spirit of God, Saul thought he could break through.

These men, those sent by Saul, were no better. They were arrogant in heart. **Verses 7-8 There they are, bellowing with their mouths with swords in their lips— for "Who," they think, "will hear us?"⁸ But you, LORD, laugh at them; you hold all the nations in derision.**

They thought they could get away with murder. Who will hold us accountable? Who will we answer to? Paul warns in *Galatians 6:7*, "*Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.*"

Think of powerful leaders toppled suddenly. History is littered with them. King Nebuchadnezzar – in an instant struck with madness as he boasted about his own majesty. (Daniel 4) Herod Agrippa – received worship as a god and was immediately struck down by an angel and eaten by worms. (Acts 12)

In our lifetime, Saddam Hussein projected absolute control over Iraq for decades, building statues and portraits of himself everywhere. He was toppled in 2003, captured in hiding, and executed just a few years later.

Our third point of application is that God reigns over the nations and He is not mocked. He **holds all the nations in derision**. He judges them with right judgment. David finds refuge in knowing that God's judgment will come upon all who boast in themselves.

4. ...when I live with future hindsight.

In verse 4 David begged God to meet him. Now, he says triumphantly that God will meet him in His steadfast love. **Verses 9-10 O my Strength, I will watch for you, for you, O God, are my fortress.¹⁰ My God in his steadfast love will meet me; God will let me look in triumph on my enemies.**

There is a discipline that I would like to share with you. It is the discipline of choosing to look beyond the trial and see the God of glory and glory of God there. I call this a discipline because it requires a deliberate choice.

Choosing to live with what I am calling "future hindsight" is deliberately setting yourself on the other side of the trial knowing there will be a day when you look back on it with hindsight. On that day you will see the goodness and glory of God for how He worked in it.

This is more than wishful or positive thinking. It's a confidence rooted in actual hindsight. It is reminding yourself how God has worked things out in your life and in the life of other believers, including in the Bible.

"For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." Romans 15:4

There have been times that you had no idea how you'd get through. Now you look back in hindsight and you see the Lord was at work. Or you read the stories of God's work in His people's lives in the scriptures. And you understand what Paul means in *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.*"

Then you take that actual hindsight and you project it forward, into the future, and you tell yourself, “One day I *will* look back on this trial and agree that the Lord is good...There is another side of this trial and God is already there and I’m going to hide myself in His refuge.”

Yes, God is on this side of the trial with you and you have to walk through it. You have to be present here and now. But He’s also on the other side of it and because you’re “*seated with Him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*” *Ephesians 2:6*, you are too.

I have learned that before any trial begins in my life, God has already worked it out for His glory and my good. He has already gone before me and there is already a triumph. Whatever comes before me, I can already know the Lord is going to lead me through and guide me and work for me and work in me and He will get the victory.

Listen, even if the victory is my death. Even if the victory is the loss of my job. The loss of my reputation. The loss of whatever I treasure, the Lord is going to turn whatever loss I experience into triumph because that’s who He is!

Our fourth point of application is to live in with future hindsight. As if the future victory of God were already so. It is confidence in who God is and knowing that whatever the outcome of the trial, I am going to agree that the Lord is good on the other side of it.

5. ...when His glory, not mine, is my aim.

David’s concern went beyond himself to his people, a people he was not yet king over. Thus he prayed in **verse 11 Kill them not, lest my people forget; make them totter by your power and bring them down, O Lord, our shield!**

David names their sin in **verse 12 – the words of their lips, their pride, cursing and lies.** And he rightly asked the Lord to **consume them in wrath in verse 13** with the intention that they may **know that God rules over Jacob to the ends of the earth.**

That they may know implies that God would make it clear to David’s enemies who exactly is executing judgment. David wasn’t making a political hit-list and plotting his revenge. He was asking the Lord to be his vindication for the glory of God and the good of God’s people.

Believers in persecuted countries often say, “We don’t seek revenge; we want Christ to be exalted.” They understand the heart of Christ in *Matthew 5:16*, “*Let your light shine before others...so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father.*” Our good works are displayed not only when we do works of benevolence, but also when we suffer unjustly and we maintain our confident hope in God.

So, when you long for vindication, ask yourself, “Is this about my reputation, or about God’s glory?” That can be a hard question to answer truthfully. But true refuge is found in seeking God’s honor, not our own.

Our fifth point of application is that the primary motive must be that the world will know that God rules over us. Our desire for vindication is not personal glory but the glory of God.

6. ...when I am weak, for His strength becomes my own.

In **verse 16**, after a night of distress, David sang of God’s **strength and steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress.** He was exhausted, but he found refuge in God’s power, not his own.

When do we most appreciate the strength and steadfast love of God? Is it not when we come face to face with our own weaknesses? Remember Paul? He listed his sufferings and spoke of the thorn in his flesh in 2 Corinthians 12. But here’s what he concluded in it all.

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’... For when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 Paul experienced the strength of Christ only when he came face to face with his weakness. This is a principle that we cannot escape.

David concluded in **verse 17 O my Strength, I will sing praises to you, for you, O God, are my fortress, the God who shows me steadfast love.** Our weakness is not to our shame, it is a doorway to the **fortress** of God’s **strength**. We enter His strength not by our own, but in our weakness.

Shelter In the Storm

On April 25, 1994 at 9:38pm my hometown of Lancaster, Texas saw one of the worst tornados in it’s history. It ripped a path of destruction a ½ mile wide and 6 miles long, killing 3 and injuring 48. It went through the heart of our town destroying 80% of our historic town square.

It did not spare my grandparent’s house. My grandparents ran into the garage of their little wood frame home and got as low as they could. Few people have basements in Texas. Huddled beside the concrete steps my grandfather sheltered his precious wife, my sweet mamar, from flying debris.

In a flash the garage exploded over them and my grandfather felt his feet being sucked into the air. The pressure ripped his back pocket off and with it his wallet was sent flying miles away. Poppy tried with all his might to push mamar close to the ground but he knew soon he was going to be sucked away, too. Suddenly, he felt himself being pinned to the ground with something heavy and metal.

The storm passed. He was alive. She was alive. But he couldn’t move. As first responders, including my father, made their way to him they discovered his boat trailer, which had been stored several houses down the street with a boat strapped to it, was now pinning my grandfather to the garage floor, with no boat. Had it had the boat, he surely would have been crushed. Had it not come, he’d be sucked away and surely listed as one of the fatalities.

But God. God spared their lives that night. They moved into a new home and sold their property. There’s a new house built on that little lot on the corner of Stewart & Griffin.

But having gone through a tornado once without shelter, my poppy vowed to never let my mamar do it again. The first improvement they made to their new home was an in-ground concrete tornado shelter in their back yard. It became a running joke that anytime there was rain forecasted they were in that bunker. And who can really blame them?

God is lot like that storm shelter. Being in the refuge of the Lord doesn’t make the storm go away, but it sure is a better place to be than out in it. My mamar felt safe in her storm shelter; something she didn’t feel when she was exposed to the storm in her garage. Because she was keenly aware of her weakness in the storm, she sought refuge in the strength of the shelter.

This is our sixth point of application. When we are weak, when we are met with trials and hardships, persecution and suffering, physical illness, mental illness, when people turn on us, when people take advantage of us, when they sell us out or turn us in, when they put words in our mouths or twist our message, when they beat us, harass us, imprison us, or kill us, *then* we are strong. For it is *then* that we are most prone to enter the fortress of God our refuge and find that His strength becomes our own.

Run To The Refuge

Jesus said, *“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you... Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.” Matt 5:10–12* David, Paul, and countless believers testify: the Lord is our fortress, our refuge, our strength.

Leaders rise, cultures rage, enemies threaten—but none can overthrow Him. Refuge is not found in the kingdoms of men. Refuge is found in the King of Kings. So where will you run when fear comes? When injustice strikes? When you're confronted with your own weakness?

Run where David ran. Run where Paul ran. Run where Christ Himself ran.

Let the Lord be your refuge and strength.