

PSALM 57:1-11

As we journey through these Psalms it becomes pretty clear that if you are a believer who is really trying to do something for God and if you are one who is really going someplace for God, there will be times when you have enemies and there will be people who will try to destroy you.

This kind of thing can hit you at work, at school, in a family, in a relationship, in a neighborhood or at church. At times you will discover there is nothing you can do to prevent this. People have often tried to destroy God's faithful people. This is nothing new to our day. It happened to Daniel, it happened to Paul, it happened to John and it happened to David. Of course the ultimate Person who people tried to destroy was Jesus Christ.

Those who purpose to live godly and be godly will suffer. Those who live godly suffer by being attacked by those godless and that is precisely what Psalm 57 is all about.

From the superscription of the Psalm we learn a great deal:

- 1) It is written for the choir director, which means it is to be publicly communicated.
- 2) It is set to "Al-tashheth" which literally means in Hebrew "do not destroy."
- 3) It is a "mikhtam" psalm which draws attention to what is inscribed or written- written word.
This emphasizes that this is the written word of God.
- 4) It is a mikhtam psalm written by David.
- 5) It is a psalm written in a specific historical context- when David fled from Saul and was hiding in a cave.

Now the cave is either the cave of Adullam, which was the cave to which David fled after leaving Gath, having pretended to be insane (I Sam.22:1). Or it is also possible that this is the cave in the wilderness of Engedi, when Saul chased him with three thousand men (I Sam.24:1-3).

There are 13 Psalms in which we get an actual historical note giving us insight into the historical context (3,7,18,34,51,52,54,56,57,59,60,63,142). This is one of those Psalms.

Now the caves were located in rugged country of the Dead Sea area. So David is in a cave. He is the King and he is living in a cave. Ever felt like this in your own life. You are being faithful to God and others seem to be getting the good life? You are faithful to God and others are getting the jobs, the raises, the promotions? They seem to be excelling and prospering while you live in your own little cave, just trying to survive life? David can relate to that.

WHEN WE THINK WE ARE ON THE VERGE OF BEING DESTROYED AND WE ARE BEING FAITHFUL TO GOD WE WILL BE ABLE TO SING IN OUR SOUL IF WE CONTINUE TO PRAY TO GOD, PRAISE GOD AND EXALT GOD.

As we have been going through these Psalms, we cannot help but see that time and time again David prayed and cried out to God when he was under fire. It would appear from this repeated theme that God is trying to give us some very important instruction.

We may assume that when most people are under fire they cry out to every one but God. But God is the One who is really in a position to do something about it. What David did was continually go to God. This is certainly a key lesson we learn from this book.

There are two main sections here:

SECTION #1- David prays to God. **57:1-6**

This is a very interesting prayer, which is comprised of two key parts:

Part #1- David prays for God's grace. **57:1-3**

The repetition "be gracious to me" emphasizes that David sensed an intense need for God's grace. There was an intense need for God's grace in this moment of his life, which were moments of total helplessness and hopelessness. The Hebrew word for "gracious" is one that literally means to incline your favor toward someone because you pity them (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p.292)

David had no one else to whom he could turn for help. He was looking to God and he was praying for God's grace.

Now the reason he needs God's grace is in verse 1:

- 1) God was David's only refuge.
- 2) Many were trying to destroy him.

David knew that his refuge was not a cave, or his own abilities or his own military strategy; he knew his only refuge was in the shelter of the wings of God's grace. God was the only one who could protect and preserve David.

One of the things that moments of helplessness and hopelessness should do is cause us to cry out to God for His grace. God wants us in situations where we totally and completely depend on Him and His grace.

The truth is we are all sinners and when it comes to saving ourselves from sin, we are all helpless and hopeless. Our only chance for salvation is to cry out to God for His grace. If we refuse to do this, we are heading to eternal destruction. But even after we are saved, when we find ourselves in some lonely cave experience, there is one to whom we can turn and that one is God.

Now in **verses 2-3** we get some insight as to what David expected to see in view of the fact that he cried out to God:

(Prayer Expectation #1)- David expected that the Most High God would accomplish things for him personally. **57:2**

The word “accomplish” in Hebrew is one that means to complete or finish something (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p.175). David prayed believing that the Most High God would complete or finish His program with him and deliver him from this trouble.

Now David is aiming this at “the Most High God.” So David believes that the only true God, the Most High God is not only interested in him, but that He will come to the aid of David Personally. It is a tremendous privilege to pray to “the Most High God.”

(Prayer Expectation #2)- David expected that the Most High God would save Him from heaven. **57:3a**

David believed God would authorize a heavenly salvation and actually send His deliverance from heaven. Now keep in mind that David is praying in a cave, not in church, not in a cathedral and not in a coliseum. He is praying in a cave and he expected this prayer from a cave would move heaven.

(Prayer Expectation #3)- David expected that the Most High God would reproach those who trample him. **57:3b**

The word “reproach” means God despises something, He scorns it and holds it in contempt (Ibid., p.307) David expected that his prayer would prompt God to hold in contempt those who walked all over him.

Then he adds the word “selah” which means stop and think about it. David wanted all people to stop and think about the fact that the Most High God takes an interest in His faithful people when they are being mistreated and He will deliver His faithful people and trample those causing the trouble.

David had to literally hide in a cave because of these people, but David could pray and the Most High God would be on his side.

Part #2- David describes his enemies. **57:4,6**

David describes his enemies as metaphorically being lions. Only these lions were really men. They were dangerous killers, whose only prey was David. **David describes those who were after him. It is clear that what made them so dangerous was their speech:**

(Description #1)- David’s enemies breathe forth fire. 57:4a

(Description #2)- David’s enemies have teeth that will cut. 57:4b

(Description #3)- David’s enemies have a tongue that will kill. 57:4c

(Description #4)- David's enemies have traps that have been set. 57:6a

David was hunkered down in a cave and outside that cave were a bunch of killers who were verbally attacking him and looking to destroy him.

This is so important to see. Our enemies try to destroy us by camouflaging themselves and by verbally ripping us to shreds. They are like hunters looking for prey. They do a lot of talking to others with the goal to destroy the faithful servant of God. But it is precisely in these moments when we can know we are protected by the Most High God.

SECTION #2- David praises God. 57:5,7-11

Apparently one of the great keys to victorious life is to continue to praise God and worship God in the midst of the threat. In the midst of the hate and alienation, David specifically exalted God. There are three parts to this Davidic praise:

(Part #1)- David was still interested in God being exalted and glorified on earth. 57:5

Notice David does not blame God or demean God, he exalts God.

(Part #2)- David had a heart that was steadfast. 57:7

David put no confidence in himself, he put it in God. He never wavered in his trust in God. He believed God would deliver him and his heart was steadfast in that belief.

(Part #3)- David had personal worship of God. 57:8-11

David played music for God (57:8). David gave thanks to God (57:9). David sang praises to God (57:9). David continued to exalt God. He did this while in a cave.

Talk about singing in the rain. It can't get much more depressing than living in a dark, damp, dungeon of a cave because people want to kill you. Yet David is singing the praises of God.

When we find ourselves surrounded by trouble, we need to pray and continue to worship and exalt God. These are the keys to coping and the keys to victory.

Practical Lessons:

- 1) God is very concerned about the faithful individual who is wrongfully suffering.**
- 2) God will listen to the private prayer of the faithful person who is under attack.**
- 3) No matter what we face, we must continue to exalt God and worship God.**
- 4) When you are pressured and boxed in, we may always go to the Lord in prayer.**