

In The Valley Of Despair

Psalm 142

Historical Context: 1 Samuel 22 or 1 Samuel 24

Inscription: Maschil of David; A Prayer when he was in the cave.

Poetical Structure: Inverted Parallelism (v. 1); Irregular Parallelism

Poetical Layout

- 1) I cried unto the Lord with my voice;
With my voice unto the Lord did I make my
supplication.
- 2) I poured out my complaint before him;
I shewed before him my trouble.
- 3) When my spirit was overwhelmed within me,
Then thou knewest my path.
In the way wherein I walked
Have they privily laid a snare for me.
- 4) I looked on my right hand, and beheld,
But there was no man that would know me:
Refuge failed me;
No man cared for my soul.

- 5) I cried unto thee, O Lord:
I said,
Thou art my refuge
And my portion in the land of the living.

- 6) Attend unto my cry;
For I am brought very low:
Deliver me from my persecutors;
For they are stronger than I.

- 7) Bring my soul out of prison,
That I may praise thy name:
The righteous shall compass me about;
For thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

Outline

- I. David's Position (v. 1-4)
 - A. He was distressed (v. 1-2)
 1. The soreness of his request (v. 1)
 2. The specifics of his request (v. 2)
 - B. He was desperate (v. 3-4)
 1. He felt fearful (v. 3)
 2. He felt friendless (v. 4)
- II. David's Prayer (v. 5-7)
 - A. His portion (v. 5)
 1. God's protection (v. 5a)
 2. God's provision (v. 5b)
 - B. His persecutors (v. 6)
 - C. His praise (v. 7)
 1. He praises God for freedom (v. 7a)
 2. He praises God for fellowship (v. 7b)
 3. He praises God for fullness (v. 7c)

Definitions

Cried - to cry out for help

Supplication - show favor, be gracious

Overwhelmed - to be or become weak; to languish

Failed - perished from me

Cared - to seek with care; to search

Portion - share, territory

Attend - listen attentively, be alert

Meditation Guide

1. How does Psalm 142 remind you of the importance of seeking God's presence in times of distress?
2. In what ways can you relate to the psalmist's feelings of loneliness and desperation expressed in Psalm 142?
3. Reflecting on Psalm 142, what does it teach you about the significance of pouring out your heart to God in prayer?
4. How does the psalmist's trust in God's ability to be their refuge and deliverer inspire you to deepen your own trust in God?
5. What practical steps can you take to cultivate a spirit of surrender and dependence on God, as demonstrated by the psalmist in Psalm 142?
6. How does Psalm 142 challenge you to prioritize seeking God's guidance and direction in your life?
7. What lessons can you learn from the psalmist's example of finding solace and refuge in God's presence during times of trouble?

8. In what ways can you apply the message of Psalm 142 to your own experiences of feeling overwhelmed or trapped?

9. How does the psalmist's unwavering faith in God's goodness and faithfulness encourage you to persevere in your own faith journey?

10. Reflecting on Psalm 142, what changes can you make in your prayer life to cultivate a deeper intimacy with God?