

Lean on God's strength

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 February 2021

Preacher: Raymond Noel

[0 : 00] Good morning. Problems are the very stuff of life, and they trouble the best of us.

Not one of us is exempted from troubles, worries, problems, whatever you may call them. Trials are indeed promised to our forefather Abraham.

God said to him, as soon as he disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, it is recorded for us in the book of Genesis.

God said to Adam, cursed is the ground because of you. Through painful toil, you will eat of it all the days of your life.

Genesis chapter 3. And it is common experience that the greater our position, rank, or authority, the greater or larger and heavier the problems that beset our hearts and minds.

[1 : 09] The headwinds seem just that much stronger the higher we get. When the problems arrive at our doorstep, we are naturally driven to use our best efforts and resources and helps to deal with it and to solve it.

That looks like good, practical advice. But no sooner that we have one problem solved, another looms up and promises to wreck our freshly arrived peace of mind.

This morning, as we look at the Bible, particularly at Psalm 62, we shall quickly discover that troubles and worries are destined to destroy your peace of mind are not a new phenomenon.

The book of Psalms was written about 500 years before Christ, and it tells us just as much.

The type of problems that individuals and families had back then were exactly the same as the problems that we have today.

[2 : 29] Such was the situation 2,500 years ago, and it remains the same today. Our worries have not gone away.

They have just changed shape, changed subject, and sometimes we can say they have changed shirts. But we all agree that troubles are here to stay.

Before we start this morning, I would like to pray. Please join with me. My Heavenly Father, I thank you for preserving your word for us to this day, so that it can continue to lead your people to wisdom, righteousness, and to glorify you.

I pray that by your Holy Spirit, you will take your word and plant it in the hearts of your people, that they may be driven from worldly wisdom into your eternal and abiding wisdom, to honor you and to come to an understanding that there is no safer and more assured walk in this world than walking with you, holding our hands and nurturing our hearts.

Your promises are our refuge and salvation. This I pray in Jesus' name. Psalm 62.

[3 : 56] Thank you, Pastor Brian, for reading Psalm 62 for us this Sunday morning. If you have your Bibles, please keep them open at Psalm 62.

It's a Psalm of David. Truly my soul finds rest in God. My salvation comes from him.

Truly he is my rock and my salvation. He is my fortress. I will never be shaken. Please continue with me to verse 5.

Yes, my soul finds rest in God. My hope comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation. He is my fortress.

I will not be shaken. David's key thoughts in verses 1 and 2 are repeated in verses 5 and 6.

[4 : 58] This repetition by David is a clue to us as to the vital importance of the thoughts expressed and how dearly David holds to them and regards them as central to his life.

Psalm 62 was written by King David, the son of Jesse, at a time when he was being tortured by his own son, Absalom.

Absalom was in deep and relentless rebellion against his father, David. He coveted his father's power and wanted the throne.

Those of you who are fathers know how painful that can be. It was a most grievous torment of David's heart.

Yet Absalom was his own flesh and blood. Like they say, when those closest to us hurt us, the blows seem heaviest and the cuts seem deepest.

[6 : 09] For example, when siblings quarrel or children go against parents for selfish or improper reasons. Here was King David, king of Judah.

Like all the kings of his time and kings today, King David had the whole machinery of state and the facilities of his kingdom at his disposal.

King David could have dispatched his elite soldiers to deal with Absalom. Strike a hard blow and be done with it.

But here, the enemy was his own flesh and blood. Yet David, despite his many failings before God, never forgot who his God was and who he was before his God.

Facing a fierce rebellion from his son and in the depth of his agony, sense of helplessness and utter despair, he turns his eyes to the eternal truth that only God was his sure defender.

[7 : 33] Only God was his sure defender. In these four verses, verses 1 and 2 and 5 and 6 that we just read this morning, the word truly appears three times.

The same word may be translated in various translations of the Bible as truly, only or alone. David's words point to an exclusive submission to God.

And only God can put us in the situations in which he chooses. David's repetition in his prayer reflects the dire and desperate situation that his tormented heart was in.

It was a situation that many of us wouldn't like to find ourselves today. David then addresses his God, Elohim, the Hebrew word for God of Israel in the Old Testament, which refers to God in contrast to anything of an earthly or human nature, a God that is above everything.

He called God his protector, his stronghold. He knew clearly where he stood in God's scheme of things.

[9 : 04] Like a ship in the middle of a terrible storm, David was in deep and urgent need of a safe harbour.

The harbour not only as a safe destination, but a place of continued protection from the ravages of fear that was assaulting his heart and mind.

Once safe with God, he knew that his rest and protection were assured, absolute, and they were certain.

The burdens of this world or the schemes of men could do nothing to shake him. There was a confident quietening of the fear and the worry coupled with a real reason for hope.

How each of us yearns for such a place of rest and refuge when we are jostled about by the weight and the worry of the anxieties of life.

[10 : 17] I have no idea what worries or trials that each of you are facing this morning. It could be a failing business, an infirmity of the body or mind, a strained spousal relationship, or simply a voluntary estrangement from God himself.

All these leave you drained, worn out, feeling defenceless, and defeated. You are at a loss as to the direction to take or what to do.

Well, there's good news for you this morning. King David, when facing similar worries, took steps that you and I can emulate.

David runs to God. He throws himself at God's limitless strength, mercy, and grace.

And he knew that he didn't deserve any grace from God. That was God's gift. My friends, you too can taste that calming of your hearts and minds.

[11 : 47] The door to God's presence is never closed. Coming into God's presence is open to everyone without exception.

Jesus answering his disciple Thomas, who asked, We don't know the way. Jesus said, I am the way, the life, and the truth.

No one comes to the Father except through me. That familiar verse you will find in the 14th chapter of John's Gospel.

Jesus tells us that he is the way to God's presence and eternal company. David recognized and he was conscious of God's sovereignty over his life.

This word sovereignty is an interesting word, as well as powerful in its meaning. Sovereignty has lost the force of its meaning in modern usage.

[12 : 57] But it simply means exclusive authority, uninfluenced and uninfluenceable, if there be such a word, by anybody.

What God declares and decides is final, not open to discussion or debate or negotiation.

That includes his salvation plan for all men. We'll come to that in a while. Please now turn with me to verses 3 and 4 of Psalm 62.

How long will you assault a man? Would all of you throw him down? This leaning wall, this tottering fence. They fully intend to topple him from his lofty place.

They take delight in lies. With their mouths they bless, but in their hearts they curse. Selah. In verses 3 and 4, David turns his thoughts from God to himself.

[14 : 08] He admits that in contrast to God's almighty power, authority, eternal love and sovereignty, even though he was a king, he himself was really nothing.

Yet triumphantly and confidently, he clings to that lovely thought that anybody in the midst of adversity would be delighted to hear.

Let me repeat that.

If God be on my side, I need not fear what man can do to me, however mighty or malicious it be.

Brothers and sisters in Christ and friends and visitors to this online service, who do you have by your side in the midst of adversity?

Who? David tries to reason with his enemies. In modern conversation, he would have said, why are you doing this to me?

[15 : 36] In response to their evil and unfair attacks. It was an imaginary conversation, of course. His enemies were not in front of him.

Even then, the pain, the worry, the fear and the sorrow of the attacks on him were real and they were immediate. In the second part of verse 3, David looks at his enemies and declares that with God as his rest, his rock and his refuge, he views his enemies as if they were a leaning wall and a tottering fence.

Both pose no serious difficulty to overcome. Both of these may appear formidable obstacles, a wall or a fence, but they are weak, ineffective to the point of imminent destruction to uselessness.

He predicts that his enemies will fail in their wicked plans to prevent him from returning to Jerusalem and his throne. such is the confidence that David had in his God in the face of odds that seem impossible to a man.

But his enemies were relentless in their planned attacks. His son Absalom and friends were determined that David should be brought down from the place of honor as king and they were prepared to employ lies as they smile and plan his downfall.

[17 : 25] But isn't that sometimes our experience? Our enemies come to us smiling and then the wicked plan becomes real.

What would you do? While David was lamenting that he was not able to defend himself, he was nonetheless confident that the one that he had run to for refuge and salvation was more than able to neutralize and defeat the enemies.

how nice it is that we can rely on a God that is above all and ready to stand with us.

The attacks against David's reputation and ultimately his throne were not random acts of defiance or disrespect that were ongoing and aimed to prevent David from returning to his royal role as king of Judah.

So David must have been very, very distressed or to use the modern word he must have been stressed. The war against David was waged with lies and today the war against Jesus Christ is also waged and fueled with lies.

[19 : 07] In verse 3 David mocks his enemies and predicts that they will fall like a sagging wall and they are and their plans will be destroyed like a tottering fence.

He almost speaks defiantly how long will you continue these attacks the violence the rage the evil plans do you really hope you can succeed he asked them.

Here David was not trying to placate his enemies or implore them to have pity on him or to go easy on him. His enemies have colluded to topple him from the highest position in the kingdom.

How do you think David felt? It brings to mind an old Tamil saying and I think it is much suited to comfort David.

It is only the mango tree trees that are heavy with the best fruit that boys throw stones at presumably to get the fruit.

[20 : 29] But the verse carries a tone of defiance but the attack against David itself is a backhanded compliment of the excellence of the victim.

David's tone of confidence defiance spills over into verses 5 and 6 which I have referred to earlier. If God be our rock and our salvation our soul need not be shaken or troubled. Brothers and sisters in Christ are any of you listening in this morning facing impossible adversity in your life?

You are not a regular at Kuching Evangelical Church just a casual visitor. You too are welcome to find relief from the situation you are in by placing yourself into the care and the hands of Jesus Christ the Son of God that same God that David was relying on.

This Jesus Christ whom I speak of was born and died more than 2,000 years ago for your sins and my sins.

[22 : 02] He rose from the dead and lives today in heaven. Jesus will return again to judge the world. Jesus is the only one the only one who can save you and pay salvation for your sins and its consequences.

Jesus is that sure ultimate refuge. The alternative you face adversity sin and its consequences alone.

It's a terrible thing to have to defend yourself from lies and I'm sure that many of you have had first-hand experience of such attacks.

What do we do? where can we turn to? A sense of righteous anger floods our mind but that doesn't drive away the anxiety or the worry or it doesn't stop the attacks.

King David has the right prescription for you this morning. It is the soundest advice that can be offered to those who are in the same situation today.

[23 : 35] Come to Jesus Christ. King David came under attack from none other than his own flesh and blood, his son Absalom.

While David could have struck back with deadly force to dispose of the rebellion, he chose to remind himself and us today that the real place of safety and the defense from any attack to our reputations, our bodies and our souls is God himself.

He is our only hope and the true rest and salvation from the consequences of and the punishment for sin.

The respite and the defense from the attack of enemies is found in the rock of ages. That has been the case for 2,500 years and it remains true today.

Let's move on to verse 7. My salvation and my honor depend on God. He is my mighty rock, my refuge.

[24 : 58] Trust in him at all times, O people. Pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. Selah. David declares that his salvation and honor depend not on what he does for himself, but depends on God.

he was speaking of an event that was to happen some 500 to 800 years later in Israel's history. David was alluding to the birth of Jesus Christ. Salvation is liberation or redemption from sin and its consequences, which includes death and permanent separation from God.

By Jesus' death on the cross, Jesus died as a substitute for sinners. He took our punishment and we get the reward from God.

Therefore, in the larger scheme of things, God was not just David's defense, God was David's ultimate defense from the ultimate enemy that every one of us faces through the ages till today.

[26 : 35] That enemy is sin. Sin does not just destroy our body like our enemies can. sin goes further.

It destroys our very existence and our soul and destroys them permanently. Now, David was not merely speaking here of his defense from his enemies.

David recognized that even if he were to lose his life at the hands of his enemies, who were after his throne, his ultimate honor and salvation rested only in the hands of the God that he had come to love, to honor, and to respect.

The God of the Bible who sent his son Jesus Christ to save sinners from the sure penalty of their sin. trust in him at all times, David says in verse 8.

David exhorts the Jewish nation to trust this very same God that he has trusted and relied on. They are called to trust by pouring out their hearts to God.

[28 : 00] And what does it mean to pour out our hearts to God? We pour out our hearts to God when we tell him its entire contents. Our fears, our anxieties, our shame, our griefs, and asking in

return for forgiveness that God in his mercy can give.

David calls on us to pour out our hearts at times at times, meaning on all occasions and in every emergency.

I do not know what is the emergency that is weighing you down this morning, my friends. But God, Elohim, knows the emergency that you are facing.

You must lay your fears on grievances before God and your desires with humility and submit your wills to him.

We must have a habitual confidence in God, live a life of dependence on him alone, as opposed to dependence on our goods, on our friends, or on other people.

[29 : 22] people. But you ask, what's wrong with depending on people, on friends, people who want to help us?

Hold it. David has the answer to that question. Turn with me to verse 9. low-born men are but a breath, the high-born are but a lie.

If weighed on a balance, they are nothing, together they are only a breath. In verse 9, David particularly cautions against relying on fellow men for answers to our life's adversities.

He was speaking from common observation, when as a Jew, as a Hebrew, he uses strong language to express the utter nothingness of men, whether they be of ordinary status or of high position.

Together, if they are tested, they are alike. Men are only the weight of a breath, he says, whether they be of great strength to help, or of great wisdom to advise.

[30 : 44] Their good intentions ultimately come to nothing. David's strong language underlines the great truth that only God is worthy of reliance and that he is our only refuge.

The best of friends, the most well-intentioned of family will be found wanting at the ultimate test in your life. Can your friends, ordinary or extraordinary, order your life, become your rock and your salvation, save you from your sins, offer you a promise of forgiveness and eternal life in Jesus Christ?

Can your friends lift the sorrow and burden of your heart and replace it with a sure confidence that comes from the rock and refuge of sinners?

Most assuredly not, I hear you say. let's test this hypothesis. A loved one lies ill in a hospital bed. You may fuss and you may flutter around, but you remain with the uncertainty and the unsettleness as when you first started.

[32 : 20] Your best intention, friends, may offer words of consolation, but not a solution. most certainly not a salvation. The ultimate answer to David's your and my problem of sin and its ultimately deadly consequences is Jesus Christ who died 2,000 years ago.

Do not trust, verse 10, do not trust in extortion or take pride in stolen goods. Though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them.

Similarly, David sounds the caution against reliance on things, possessions, and against immoral and doubtful acquisition of these things to escape poverty and other perils of life.

He warns against obtaining wealth by fraud or by force. And he gives a clear injunction against obtaining possession by dishonest means.

Do not trust in extortion or take pride in stolen goods? That's quite a norm these days.

[33 : 57] Immoral or dubious or violent methods of obtaining wealth or possessions to answer the needs of life are a big no-no.

The idea that the end justifies the means has no place in a Christian's life. All unjust, unfair, and inequitable possessions are an abomination.

They are a curse. And even if the increase of your wealth is lawful, don't spend too much time worrying about it.

In summary, David tells us do not rely on people and do not rely on possessions. Neither will give you the ultimate protection and in the final analysis, they will let you down.

So far, David the psalmist has pointed out that only God can be a real source of sure comfort and refuge from the eternal questions that faced him and also face each of us today.

[35 : 18] Clearly, reliance on man or possessions is of little avail. My friends, where are you today?

Are you tired of being a nomad, carrying your worries in a bag, from person to person asking for advice, or from place to place trying to hide from them?

What is the source of your comfort? What is the assurance of a real answer to sin in your life? What is your guarantee of comfort, protection, and ultimate safety from the ultimate problem in your life, your sin and your consequences, and its deadly consequences?

Jesus says to you, come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Let me read that again from Matthew 11 verse 28. Jesus says, come to me, all you are weary and burdened, I will give you rest.

[36 : 46] In times of fear, and when your enemies are fierce, recall to mind the attributes and titles of God, our rock of strength and our salvation.

These words do not even come near to describing the truth that they represent. We shall not be shaken or cast down by malice and wickedness conjured up by men.

It's a great comfort to know that our God is our only hope. When you find him, you need not seek any further. He is sufficient.

our God is sufficient. We should be earnest and pour our hearts out. There is no substitute for godly sincerity.

God is not mocked. Brothers and sisters, dwell for a moment on the troubles that besiege you most today.

[38 : 03] How are you coping? Are you on top of things as you would like to be? Or are you like the wrestler on the mat, pinned down by the weight and the ferocity of your problems and worries?

David says to you, find rest in the eternal God, the salvation and refuge that David turned to in his time of deep trouble.

Be not tricked. The trials that separate you from thinking about the God of the Bible are a trick. They are an illusion. Satan's propaganda to blind you to the eternal truth that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

Jesus Christ alone came into the world to save sinners. And in verse 11 and 12, which we will consider together, one thing God has spoken, two things have I heard, that you, O God, are strong and that you, O Lord, are loving.

Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done. God reveals himself in various ways. He reveals himself by describing his attributes through his actions.

[39 : 46] actions and we, as his creatures, are to hear it and to receive it. In his wisdom, God has repeatedly impressed these lessons on David's mind.

One, that God is almighty and sovereign, that he has the events of history under control and nothing happens without God knowing it.

two, God is merciful and loving. In other words, he does not treat us according to our wrongdoing, instead delights in forgiving us and treating us as his sons and daughters.

Three, God will reward each person according to what he has done. It is only fair that at the finish line of our lives, our rewards should be in proportion to what we have done.

They should match our deeds. If our life has been spent in sin and disobedience to God, we shall definitely meet God's anger and be eternally lost.

[40 : 58] On the other hand, if there be any good deeds, these deeds have only any merit in God's eyes if they are because we have the forgiveness of sin in Jesus Christ.

No service done to him will go unrewarded. Yet, no offense against God will go unpunished. In short, God's approval is only available through Jesus Christ because Jesus said, I am the way, the life, and the truth.

God's love, no one comes to the Father except through me. My prayer for all of you who suffer loss or are in great injuries, my prayer for you this morning is for all of you who suffer, who are suffering loss or injury or in great sorrow, that it will awaken in you a greater reliance on the infinite wisdom and love of God who has an unfailing good plan for you to restore you to himself through the forgiveness of sin and to graft you on to his family as sons and daughters to enjoy all the duties, responsibilities, and benefits of sonship.

Let us pray. my father in heaven, you heard David's cry for salvation and protection from evil men 2,500 years ago.

This morning, you can see the burden in each heart that has heard your invitation in Psalm 62. Just like for David, you have heard the heart cry of the people listening this morning, you have also heard the distracting voices that call people away from an heavenly father who loves them and wants to be their father, protector, and savior.

[43 : 13] I pray that by your Holy Spirit, you will in your mercy speak to troubled and trembling hearts that they may seek you for salvation refuge.

Speak to them clearly, calling them to yourself that they may have their burdens and problems lifted, hearts refreshed, and their lives turned in repentance from sin.

I pray that you will bring each one into the light of your eternal and everlasting word, promise and command, and that everyone that believes in your son, Jesus Christ, shall not perish, but have eternal life.

God bless you. God bless you.