

“Like a Rock”

Psalm 62

Preached by Dr. Robert F. Browning, Pastor
Smoke Rise Baptist Church
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Many of you recognize that the sermon title is a slogan used by Chevrolet in its truck advertisements. When marketers wanted to convince consumers that their trucks were strong and reliable, they compared it to a rock. Bob Seger’s song by this title served as the catalyst for this ad, which has been running for fifteen years.

When David wanted to share with his readers his impressions of God, or at least the God he needed, he used the same metaphor. “My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from Him. He alone is **my rock** and my salvation. He is my fortress. I will never be shaken” Psalm 62:1. Two more times in this chapter, David refers to God as his rock, the final time calling God his mighty rock for even more emphasis.

Why did David need a rock, a strong and reliable refuge-fortress? He was under attack and needed help to survive. Not only was he wrestling with the forces of evil, but his own fears. His enemies, who claimed to be his friends, were undermining his work and reputation with slanderous lies. Evidently they were relentless and quite persuasive and this conspiracy was taking a toll on David.

Surely you can identify with David. Life is filled with intimidating challenges, some of which catch us completely by surprise. It grieves me to say that this has happened to several in our congregation at this time. Maybe you are one of them.

Perhaps you are in a struggle for your life like David was. You have received bad news about your health or seem to be losing a battle with a chronic illness. Your marriage has dissolved and a relationship that once brought you joy and happiness now brings sorrow and disappointment. Like David, a friend has betrayed you, causing you great anguish. You have lost your job and with it feelings of security and pride. Your mate of many years has passed away and the vacuum has been filled with loneliness and grief. Your cute toddler has grown into an out-of-control teenager in trouble with school officials or the law. You are a conscientious teen that feels enormous pressure to meet parents’ expectations.

What do you do when life is bigger than you are and you are not sure you are up to the challenge? Do you give in or give up? Do you ignore reality and pretend these challenges will go away? Do you grit your teeth and plunge ahead on your own strength?

What would David tell you to do? What advice did he have for his readers when he turned his attention away from himself to others? “Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to Him, for God is our refuge” Psalm 62:8.

David stood among the conflicts and confusion of his people and said with quiet certainty that his confidence was in God, not himself, any other man, brute force or even his vast possessions. He encouraged them to follow his lead, even when they felt impatient and in despair.

A reading of Psalm 62 leaves me with one firm impression. The challenges that David faced shook his confidence but not his faith. He was tottering like a fence bulging in the middle. He did not possess the wisdom or strength to cope with or overcome his challenges and was close to falling. He knew, however, that he was not alone and the God that was on this journey with him was strong and reliable, like a mighty rock.

He also knew that God steadfastly loved him. “One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong and that you, O Lord, are loving” Psalm 62:11. Of this remarkable revelation, Walter Brueggemann writes, “Each of these is crucial, for power without love is tyranny, while love without power lapses into sentimentalism. But God is both and in this compassionately powerful One, men and women of faith find refuge.”

This includes us. As David and countless others have done, we can trust God at all times and pour our hearts out to Him when the forces of disorder and hostility threaten us. We, too, will find Him to be a good listener and faithful provider. He knows the value of putting words to our grief, sorrow, anger, disappointment, worries and fears. He knows how to be a loving and responsible parent providing wisdom, guidance, patience, opportunity, courage, strength, peace, and renewed confidence.

The response of Joseph Scriven to his challenges has lifted our spirits on many occasions. These words penned over one hundred-fifty years ago still speak to us.

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry, everything to God in prayer!

Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh, what needless pain we bear,

All because we do not carry, everything to God in prayer.

Are we weak and heaven laden, cumbered with a load of care?

Precious Savior still our refuge, take it to the Lord in prayer.

Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer.

In His arms He'll take and shield thee; take it to the Lord in prayer.

Is this what you need this morning? Do you need a friend that you can pour your heart out to and trust? Do you need someone that can help you confront your challenges and courageously deal with them? Do you need someone that can help you overcome your fears and renew your confidence?

If you do, then you are ready for an encounter with God, an encounter in which you honestly acknowledge your weakness and self-doubt on the one hand but your trust and confidence in Him on the other. Open your heart, unburden your heart this morning and trust Him to walk with you along your journey, providing what you need. Let Him be the solid rock upon which you stand.