

Psalm 64 • The outward and the inward battle

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Not a very long Psalm. Psalm 64. Let's read it. It says,

*“Hear my voice, O God, in my complaint;
preserve my life from dread of the enemy.
2 Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked,
from the throng of evildoers,
3 who whet their tongues like swords,
who aim bitter words like arrows,
4 shooting from ambush at the blameless,
shooting at him suddenly and without fear.
5 They hold fast to their evil purpose;
they talk of laying snares secretly,
thinking, “Who can see them?”
6 They search out injustice,
saying, “We have accomplished a diligent search.”
For the inward mind and heart of a man are deep.
7 But God shoots his arrow at them;
they are wounded suddenly.
8 They are brought to ruin, with their own tongues turned against them;
all who see them will wag their heads.
9 Then all mankind fears;
they tell what God has brought about
and ponder what he has done.
10 Let the righteous one rejoice in the LORD
and take refuge in him!
Let all the upright in heart exult!” (ESV)*

There's a statement, a very small statement in this song that I want to call your attention to, and it's at the end of verse 6. If you look there again in your Bible, there's a statement that David makes here, and he makes it within the context of talking about his enemies.

But he says, “...*the inward mind and heart of a man are deep.*” Even though that little statement is nestled within the context of David speaking of his

enemies, that is a true statement of all mankind. That's true of you. It's true of me. It was true of David. It was true of his enemies.

The inward mind and heart are deep. We're not talking about deep intellectually, it might be. In some cases, most of us not. We're talking rather about a depth that is speaking of our feelings, how far our feelings go. Our thoughts and our feelings, they run very deep in our lives, and sometimes they can even be all-consuming.

Very, very deep thing to think of what you feel, how you feel. People feel very deeply about various things. What one person might feel deeply about, another person doesn't give a second thought to, and that's just, I suppose, because we're so different.

But, when this Psalm starts out, you'll notice that David begins to level a complaint. And his complaint is basically this, instead of asking the Lord to protect him from his enemy, I want you to notice what David asked for protection from. He says in that first verse, “...*preserve my life from dread of the enemy.*”

This is where David is beginning to speak about the depth of his own feelings, the depth of his own inward mind. And he says, Lord, I need your deliverance from my dread of the enemy. Isn't that interesting? He doesn't ask to be delivered from his enemy, he asked to be delivered from dread of his enemy. In other words, fear. David is asking to be delivered from fear, he's asking to be strengthened and helped in the midst of his fear.

And I think, if most of us are willing to admit it, we would probably say that the only thing worse than a scary situation, is the anticipation of a scary situation. I mean, that's where we really, truly suffer. That's where we really begin to take on the difficulty of the situation. It's not the situation, it's thinking about the situation! It's anticipating and dreading the situation.

Interesting here, the word, dread means to anticipate with great apprehension or fear. We've all felt dread, and most of the time it's over nothing! Most of the time, the anticipation that we have about a particular situation that we're fearful of doesn't come to fruition. Or it's a lot less than what we had originally been fearful of. But it's that dread, man alive, that's the hard part, and that's what David is asking for deliverance from.

Notice what he says in verse 2. He says, “*Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked...*” And when he says, “*secret plots,*” he knows that people have been

talking about and actually plotting his downfall. He knows that people have been talking about him. They're setting a trap, they're making plans, and it created... it became a source of anxiety for David.

I mean, knowing that somebody is out to get you, they're out to trip you up. They're out to make life miserable. If not miserable, they want to destroy your life. Just to know that all that's going on, that is one of the things that can really produce anxiety in our lives. And you'll notice in this Psalm that the enemies that David is talking about aren't using the conventional weapons of warfare like swords and arrows. They were using words.

Look at verse 3. He says, “(they) *whet their tongues* (their tongues) *like swords, who aim bitter words like arrows, ⁴shooting from ambush at the blameless,*” Once again, we all know how damaging words can be. That old saying, “sticks and stones” and stuff, it's not true. Words can hurt me. Words do hurt me. And David is being damaged, and his feelings run very deep about what's going on.

But then, he goes on to say that what his enemies don't know, is that God is actually shooting arrows at them. In verse 7, he says, “...*they are wounded suddenly.*” In fact, he says they're brought to ruin.

Now, this is interesting because David is asking for deliverance from this dread, and yet now he's speaking like God has already judged them.

These are words of confidence. We've talked about it many times through the Psalms. David injects words of confidence in the midst of his prayer, words of faith, if you will. Using those words of faith to say, but, the Lord... The Lord is going to see me through this time. And, what's the end result? He says, it's going to be a good kind of fear.

In verse 9, he says, “*Then all mankind fears;*” and this is the fear of the Lord, this is the good fear. He's been talking about these deep, seated fears that he has, this dread, if you will. But now he says, when the Lord moves on my behalf, this is going to be a good fear. And he says, “(the people then will) *tell what God has brought about and (people) ponder what he has done.*” And that's always a good thing.

When you hear a good testimony about the Lord's deliverance, and people are left to ponder the goodness, the faithfulness and so forth, of the Lord. The important message from this Psalm is that you and I have a place to come when we're afraid. You might remember in Paul's letter to the Philippians, he wrote about anxiety and fear. I'll put it on the screen for you. He wrote,

Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV)

... do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

...do not be anxious about anything (And that's a whole lot easier said than done, isn't it? He says), but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And (then) the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Can I just tell you something about that peace that passes understanding? It is not always easily discovered. What I mean by that is, like all the things of the Lord, it does not come to the casual observer. It does not come to the casual searcher.

When we go through the Book of Proverbs and we learn about God's wisdom, it says over and over again that, to find wisdom, we must search for it as for treasure. Like we're searching for something that we greatly long for on this earth. What are you searching for?

Some people are searching for happiness. Well, the Bible says if you search for God in the same way that some people are looking for happiness. I just want to be happy or meaning to their lives. That's another big thing people will say today. I'm just searching for meaning.

Well, if people search for the Lord the way they search for meaning, they would find all the things that they're looking for. But it doesn't just come to the casual searcher, neither does peace that passes understanding.

Listen, what Paul is saying in this particular passage is, first of all, don't let anxiety rule your life. And then, secondly, in that time that you would otherwise spend being anxious, spend it in prayer, laying your supplications before the Lord with thanksgiving. And don't stop until the peace of God reaches your heart. Don't give up. Don't let go.

Don't just say, well, I prayed, and it didn't do anything. You stay there. You stay there in that place of prayer. You search for it as for hidden gold, search for it as for treasure, search for it as for the things that you want the most. Listen, if you want it the most, you'll find it.

We're told in the scriptures that he who seeks finds (Matthew 7:7), but again, this seeking is not a, it's not there, that casual sort of a thing. And a lot of times when people pray, it's very casual. When they talk to the Lord, well, I prayed about it, but I just... I don't know. The Lord didn't seem to give me an answer.

Well, did you have an expectation that answer was going to come in a particular prescribed period of time? Well, yeah. Why? Maybe God wanted you to persevere in prayer, maybe God wanted you to stay in prayer about that for a long period of time.

I've told you guys this many times, when I read the autobiography of George Mueller and he... it's kind of almost like his diary, like his prayer journal. And you'll be reading along, and he'll suddenly write in there and say, day 362 of praying about such and such. And I remember reading that going, say what? 300 and something. How? Of... Yeah.

He would actually keep track of how many days he continued to pray about something until he had an answer. And you and I want to just go through the drive-up window of prayer-answering, with God, and just get our quick two-minute meal or my money back, please.

And God says, I want you to tarry, I want you to tarry with Me in prayer. I want you to tarry for peace. You need peace? Tarry at My... at the throne of grace. Persevere at My feet. Come to Me and don't give up. Pursue it with a reckless abandon, pursue Me with a reckless abandon.