

Psalm 57

For the director of music.

"Do not Destroy". Of David. A miktam.
When he had fled from Saul into the cave.

The New Testament tells us that we are supposed to "count it all joy" when we fall into various trials. We're commanded to not think it a strange thing when we encounter trials in our life.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was tried and tested and tempted during his time on this earth. So, because the servant is not greater than his master, we can expect the same kind of circumstances in our lives.

The believer should not be surprised when he / she experiences trials and hard things in this life. Yet, no one likes trials. In fact, it is our tendency to want to get out of the trials in our lives. When God brings chastening into our lives in the form of trials and suffering, we don't consider that to be a joyful thing, naturally - no one would!

But we know that these sufferings and hardships are for our good. God intends to use them to make us more like his perfect Son who - according to Hebrews - was perfected by the suffering that he endured.

Hebrews 2:9-11 New Living Translation

⁹ What we do see is Jesus, who for a little while was given a position "a little lower than the angels"; and because he suffered death for us, he is now "crowned with glory and honor." Yes, by God's grace, Jesus tasted death for everyone. ¹⁰ God, for whom and through whom everything was made, chose to bring many children into glory.

And it was only right that he should make Jesus, through his suffering, a perfect leader, fit to bring them into their salvation.¹¹ So now Jesus and the ones he makes holy have the same Father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters.

We can probably all testify that while some of our trials might be permanent and never-ending in this life, yet there are a good many of our trials that are temporary and limited in duration. They will pass eventually, and you will go on to live after they're done.

But that time of waiting is the hardest part sometimes. You want to get out of it! Maybe there's an option to get out of it - and yet, you know that that's not the way that God wants you to go. It wouldn't glorify God. It wouldn't solve your real problem; so, you continue to endure.

But it's as you are enduring that you need help. You need strength to continue to endure. You need a word from the Lord to sustain you during the trial. You need help knowing how to pray to the Lord in these times. You need help to know how to pray as you wait for your trial to end.

This is what we see David doing in Psalm 57. We need to know **How to Pray as We Wait for Our Trial to End**. This is the wonderful example that God ordained David to set for us in Psalm 57.

Psalm 57 NKJV

For the director of music. To the tune of "Do Not Destroy." Of David. A miktam. When he had fled from Saul into the cave.

So, two pieces of information from this superscription prove particularly helpful.

First, the tune or style of this psalm has an interesting meaning once it's translated. The meaning as the NIV has it is "Do Not Destroy." That's the meaning of the phrase that most other translations transliterate as *Altaschith* (pronounced *al-tas-kith*).

So, it's as if David is pleading with someone to not destroy him. There were numerous times in his life during which David would have felt this way. So, what time is he talking about here in this psalm?

That's where the **second** piece of information in this superscription becomes very helpful. We see that this psalm was written in conjunction with David's hiding from Saul in a cave.

This may be referring to the events found in 1 Samuel 24. King Saul comes to kill David but while he's on his way to get David, Saul stops in a cave - it says (in Hebrew) - to "cover his feet," which is a euphemism to describe what we would call "using the restroom." It just so happens this is the cave that David and his men are hiding in!

Well, of course, David's men want David to do Saul in so that they can be done with hiding from their king. But David won't do it.

David is in the position to end his trial himself by his own planning and effort. But he would not do it. How much patience and self-control would this have taken? To not kill Saul was to ask for at least months - if not years - of additional life-threatening danger. Yet, he refused to take matters into his own hands and kill Saul in self-defense.

David would simply wait... for his trial to end.

What we will hear in this psalm is touching on **How to Pray as You Wait for Your Trial to End**. David has been there. We need to learn from this man who was so near to death and yet would not take a short cut in terms of ending his own trial. Instead, he prayed with an eye of faith firmly fixed on God. We need to do that, too.

How to Pray as You Wait for Your Trial to End.

Step 1: v1 Plead for Mercy/Grace Knowing that God is All You Have

"Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You, and in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, Until these calamities have passed by."

The need was so great that David repeated the request; this shows the urgency of the prayer. In several of the psalms we've studied, David delay expressing his trust in the Lord until the end of the psalm; But here we have him doing it right up front.

This is a helpful practice in prayer. You don't need to wait until you've expressed all your difficulties and struggles to the Lord before you verbally confirm your trust in him.

God is all that David had in this life; He's all that you have. David's soul trusted in God and nothing else; there was nothing else to trust in.

Think of God the way that David did. Picture him as a mother bird and you are the little helpless baby bird - and you're just going to take refuge under his protecting wing until the storm passes by. Notice, this prayer is joined with an announcement of the fact that David had faith in God. When we place our faith in God, He will not fail us. When the rain or storm is coming, the baby chickens run and get under the wings of the mother hen, and no rain falls on them.

These outstretched wings of God that are protecting David here, are available to all who will hide in the shadow of God's love.

Your storm will pass. But **God will not pass out of your life ever**. God will be with you forever - if you're trusting Jesus Christ.

David is literally in a protecting cave; yet he's still in danger. Perhaps you're in a position like this as you wait for your trial to end. You're protected - in a dangerous place. In some ways, David was cornered. He was more in danger in that cave than he would have been elsewhere, possibly. Yet sometimes it's when you are cornered with no way out that God has ordained for you to stay there and experience His protection. Notice that David does not call the cave his refuge, though it was a refuge in a certain physical sense; rather it is God whom he calls His refuge.

So, as you're waiting for your trial to end, **plead with God for mercy, knowing that He is all you have and that He is all you need**.

Step 2: v2 Call to God Knowing that He is Still in Sovereign Control

"I will cry out to God Most High, To God who performs all things for me".

Even this trial of yours is part of God's purpose for you. It's one of the "all things" that He performs for you. Trials are not outside of God's control. They are tools in God's hands to make you more like his Son.

Do not let the knowledge that the trial comes from Him prevent you from crying out to Him for help. You need to do both - recognize that God sends the trials and be just as sure that God cares about you in those trials.

God is "most high" or "sovereign." He's in control. So, as you cry out to Him, also trust that He is able and willing to do what is right in your trial.

David is recognizing in this that without the help of God, he is helpless. We all are helpless, without the hand of God doing all things well for us. God never failed him before when he cried out to Him, and He will not fail him now. Sometimes we may forget all the things God has already done for us. David is not just praying to God and thanking Him for the things He has done for him, but David is reminding himself as well, that God has done wonderful things for him in the past.

Psalm 138:7-8 The Message

7-8 When I walk into the thick of trouble, keep me alive in the angry turmoil. With one hand strike my foes, with your other hand save me. Finish what you started in me, God. Your love is eternal—don't quit on me now.

It is a marvelous thing to consider God is literally willing to perform all things in us, through us, on us, and for us, if only we will let Him.

The trouble is that sometimes we may insist on performing all things in the energy of our own resolve, in the strength of our own power. Allow God to take control; He is all Powerful, He is all Knowing, and He is all Present.

As you are waiting for your trial to end, cry out to God, **knowing that He is in sovereign control.**

Step 3: v3 Be Assured that God Will Faithfully Help You

"He shall send from heaven and save me; He reproaches the one who would swallow me up. *Selah*. God shall send forth His mercy and His truth".

God shall send forth His mercy and His truth. Mercy and truth poetically are represented as ministers of God. Standing in His presence, ready to execute His pleasure, and employed by Him in the salvation of His people. My help, your help and David's help comes from the Lord of heaven. The world is the enemy of those who love God. Why should we find it strange that the world hates us? Look at what Jesus said about all of this.

John 15:18 "If the world hates you, ye know that it hated me before [it hated] you."

Selah above means to pause and think on these things. Just as God has done in the past, He will send mercy to save David and truth to inform all. Mercy and truth shall reign in the end.

David is confident that God will deliver him from his trial and the worst possible consequences of it. The worst of trials for a believer is temporary. It will pass.

God is faithful and He will help you. This is not going to be your permanent existence. You and I are ultimately going to a place where there will be no more trials. So, as you wait for your trial to end - whatever kind of trial it may be - **be assured that God will faithfully help you.**

Step 4: v4 Recognize the Real Danger You Are In

"My soul is among lions; I lie among the sons of men Who are set on fire, whose teeth are spears and arrows, And their tongue a sharp sword".

David in this time of his life is recognizing throughout this psalm so far that God is all that he really has in this life, that God is sovereign, that God is a faithful helper... And yet, that doesn't prevent him from fully realizing that he is in a perilous situation.

Peter thought that the enemy of our soul was something like a lion against us: Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). When we feel threatened by the devil, we may appeal to God as David did.

Charles Spurgeon gave comfort and advice to believers who felt they were **among lions**:

- If you are **among lions**, you will have fellowship with Jesus and His church.
- If you are **among lions**, you will be driven nearer to your God.
- If you are **among lions**, remember that God has them on a leash.
- If you are **among lions**, remember there is another Lion, of the Tribe of Judah.

These are not sons of God; they are sons of men. A natural lion or a bear, was no problem to David. These lions are people who have a destructive nature.

Even the words that come from their mouth are destructive "their tongue a sharp sword". David had been hunted down like an animal. They had threatened his life and they had told lies on him, they had even tried to tear him to pieces, but God had protected David. They were so mad at David, it seemed as if they were on fire with hatred.

It doesn't dishonor the Lord or detract from His glory when you recognize how dangerous a situation, you're in when you're experiencing a trial. With each trial you face, you have spiritual realities that are working behind the scenes in a way you could never know. *Your failure to follow the Lord in this trial could and probably will have devastating consequences on you, on your family, on the body of believers - probably more than you would know.*

As we experience trials and wait on the Lord to end the trial - yes, **we're in dangerous territory but there is a greater danger. See verse 5.**

Step 5: v5 Ask That God Would Be Glorified in Your Trial

The greatest danger in a very real sense is that God would be blasphemed or dishonored in some other way through your behavior in - and response to - the trial.

"Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; Let Your glory be above all the earth." (This is also stated in Psalm 108:5)

Let Your glory be above all the earth: David correctly reasoned that his problems all came from earth; he would glorify God above all the earth. God was worthy of David's praise and focus more than any crisis or danger on the earth.

How can God be glorified in your trial? What brings Him glory as you suffer?

How about a good attitude? Attitude is so crucial in your trial. What does your attitude communicate to others about your God as you suffer? Do they get the sense from you that He can be trusted? Do others see in you, encouragement that God is good to His people?

What are others learning about you from your response to having to wait for a trial to end? Are you wasting your trial? Is God giving you an open door to glorify Him - but you refuse to do it? He's in no hurry. He'll wait for that attitude to change.

God is so merciful that even if you've just utterly failed in your response to waiting for this trial to end that He is still waiting for you. He's still waiting for you to come into a frame of mind from which you can then glorify God as you're waiting for your trial to end.

David is so passionate about this desire of God being glorified in his trial that he repeats this exact same request in verse 11. May the Lord help each of us to have that same fervency in our desire to see **God glorified in our trial.**

Step 6: v6 Realize that Some Day Your Trial Will Be Reversed

"They have prepared a net for my steps; My soul is bowed down; They have dug a pit before me; Into the midst of it they themselves have fallen". Selah

Psalm 7:15 New Living Translation states, "They dig a deep pit to trap others, then fall into it themselves".

David has literal physical human enemies. They are trying to trap him. He's in a cave! He's pretty much trapped. He is expressing confidence that God will take the plans of his enemies to trap and destroy him - and that God will turn those things right around on those enemies.

As Christians, we do sometimes have human enemies - humans that have for whatever reason decided to make life hard for us. But as the New Testament reveals, humans are not our ultimate problem. Our fellowman is not ultimately responsible for our struggles.

In fact, we are in some way wrestling with unseen realities and beings. Our only defense is the Armor of God - prayer and God's Word.

But we can be assured that whether in this life or ultimately in eternity, God will take the plans of these evil forces and beings and turn them right around on themselves. Even Satan - our most fearsome enemy will be cast into the Lake of Fire forever.

Someday, your trials and the evil one who had such a large and malicious part to play in them - all of that will be reversed and done away with and you will be vindicated, and everything will be right.

Steps 7-9: vv7-9 Determine to Praise God in Your Trial

⁷ My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and give praise.⁸ Awake, my glory! Awake, lute and harp! I will awaken the dawn.⁹ I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing to You among the nations.

Determine to praise God in your trial. Why?

Does it not show that you and I are - in some way - other than worldly when we praise God in our sufferings? For natural unsaved people, what is their response to things going wrong? It's not singing! It's complaint. It's dissatisfaction. It's turning to unworthy things for comfort and consolation.

But when you do what David does here and you sing as you're waiting for your trial to end; that is out of this world!

What kind of a person can sing in his trial? The man of sorrows who was acquainted with grief and on the night in which He was betrayed he sang a hymn with his disciples. How could He sing a hymn? Hebrews tells us that He was looking forward to the joy set before him.

Hebrews 12:1-3 The Message **Discipline in a Long-Distance Race**

Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now he's there, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls!

Would you like to draw attention to your Lord and Savior? Then do like He did in his trials and sing praises to God as you are waiting for your trial to end.

Step 10: v10 Remind Yourself of God's Revealed Character

"For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens, And Your truth unto the clouds."

Think about this: A cave narrows and darkens the vision of most people, but David's heart and song soared unto the clouds. He exalted the mercy and truth of God even from difficult circumstances.

In verse 3, a good deal of what we hear about in verse 10 was already stated but in a little different way. In verse 3 David was asking God to send help from heaven and send His loyal love and truth. And now it's stated a little differently in verse 10 where David asserts that God's loyal love and truth reach to those heavens from which He sends help.

This is part of God's revealed character - He is loyal in His love for His chosen covenant people. He is truth itself. God doesn't abandon those who are truly His. He is **incapable** of lying - the New Testament explicitly says as much. He cannot lie. He is truth - Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. God is loyal, faithful, and unchanging in His love.

God will not lie to you. God will not abandon you. You might feel lied to or abandoned. But get your feelings in line with God's revealed character! Your feelings are fallible. God's character is unchanging. Anchor yourself to what He says about Himself in the Bible. If you do, as you're waiting for God to end your trial, you will find yourself with a great deal of material with which to fuel your singing praise to Him in the most unlikely circumstances in life. **Remind yourself of God's character.**

Step 11 - Final Step

v11 Once More... Ask God to be Glorified in Your Trial

- Pleading for mercy, knowing that God is all that you have in your trial
- Calling to God, knowing that He is still in sovereign control even of your trial
- Being assured that God will faithfully help you through your trial
- Not ignoring the danger that you are in during your trial
- Asking that God be glorified in your trial
- Realizing that someday your trial will be reversed

- Determining to praise *God* in your trial
- Reminding yourself of *God's* revealed character in your trial

Once more for emphasis, ask *God* to be glorified in your trial, like David does in verse 11 to end the psalm.

“Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; Let Your glory be above all the earth”.

It makes sense that David repeats this request from verse 5. Isn't this the whole purpose of the existence of everything? *God's* glory! Man's salvation is not what this created world is about. *God's* glory is!

God made all of this - and all of you! - to glorify Himself. *God* made your trial ... to glorify Himself. David didn't wait for his circumstances to change before he praised *God* **above the heavens**.

May the Lord help you to keep these realities in mind as you wait for Him to end your trial.

Resources:

The Leadership Bible, New International Version

Biblegateway.com

Explaining the Book.com

Enduring Word, David Guzik

Biblestudy.org