

## Experiencing Calmness of Soul in God Alone

*Psalm 62 ESV*

Pastor Brian Warne

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*[Speaker: Pastor Scott Nicoll]*

*[Recording begins in midst of Scott speaking]*

...this particular summer because we've had both our missions pastors—Pastor Brian from Mexico and then Pastor Roger from Brazil. And I know that many of you have had the privilege of having both of them in your homes. I know a lot of you, your small groups had them over and they were able to share their ministry with you and you got to know them. It's just unique the type of ministry that we have here at Countryside and our missions philosophy, where we really do get to know our missionaries.

And if you will just think for a moment; put yourself in their shoes. They're away for long periods of time, and so when they come back to their church home, church family, there are a lot of new faces around here. And I know they are real excited to get to know some of you newer ones, some of you that may not know either the Warnes or the Johansens very well. And I hope that you took that opportunity to do that. But I know I can speak for both the Warnes and the Johansens, that they always invite you to come and to visit them in their homes on the field. It's a great opportunity, and while even as youth pastor we've taken some trips down to both Brazil and Mexico, I would encourage you as a family to consider going down and visiting our missionaries. It would be a great encouragement to them, and I think a great encouragement and challenge to you as well.

But it's been great to have Brian back. I've enjoyed getting to catch up on time—we go way back. We were talking the other day about how we—before Brian and Danielle left for the mission field—how they were just growing in the faith, and oftentimes we'd get locked out of the school that we were attending and we couldn't get in because the janitor didn't show up with the keys, so we'd have service out in the yard. So I guess it kind of got them primed for Mexico because sometimes they have to do things like that. You know, they've got to kind of think on their feet.

But I know that the weather we've been enjoying over these last couple of weeks could probably make you think about home a little bit. Mexico is a little warm. Although we think it's warm here, I was told that at points in the summertime in Mexico it's 160 degrees field temperature. So anyway, it's warm—it's warm down there.

So as Pastor Brian comes and brings the word of truth to us, let's just remember to be praying for our missionaries. Thanks.

Pastor Brian come on up and preach the word this morning.

*[Speaker: Pastor Brian Warne]*

Buenos dias. Good morning to all of you this morning. Good to be here. Before I move into the message this morning, I want to take this final opportunity to thank you for all of the things that have been done to make our time here over these past few weeks such an encouragement and a blessing to us. We've loved the opportunity to fellowship with many of you and to serve alongside of you. We've gotten to know some of our newer members of the Countryside family and we've enjoyed time with old friends as well.

And even now as I look out and have the opportunity, as Scott was mentioning—so many of you I haven't had the opportunity to get to know. And others we've wished to have time to spend with, and the time has gone by so rapidly. I guess because of how fast it's gone by, I just want again to extend that invitation, as Scott mentioned, for you to make plans and drop down and see us in Sinaloa. We can't offer you Cancun or an exciting and relaxing time spent away like you might enjoy in other places that you would like to visit on vacation, but what we do offer you is hospitality of our humble home in a Mayo Indian village and the opportunity to be a great encouragement to your missionaries, and to experience firsthand at least a little bit of what the Lord is doing in answers to your prayers and through your sacrifice.

The very idea of making a trip like that might be somewhat outside of your comfort zone and that's okay. It may require that your faith be stretched as you trust the Lord, but even that would add to the impact of such an experience, the impact that it would have on your life personally, and make it all the more worthwhile.

Well, I have to tell you each time we come back to Kansas, I feel a little bit like somebody who's been dropped here from another planet. It's a very different world from the world in which we live, and one that seems to be changing more and more all the time. So I like to take some time at the beginning of our trip as we return here to Kansas, to get reacquainted a little bit about with what is going on in the culture and in the lives of our Countryside families, while praying for the Lord's direction in deciding on a passage of scripture that I should choose to study and prepare to preach to you during our times that we'll have together.

And as I've been meditating on various passages, my heart was drawn once again into the Psalms. The Psalms tend to speak right into where we live and into the issues of our lives. And there's one psalm in particular that I believe speaks greatly into the need that exists in the church today.

As I've had time to listen to what is going on in the lives of our families, some of the concerns, some of the difficulties, and even reflect on the questions that have been asked of me concerning our life in Mexico during this past year, one psalm stood out as the psalm that we should spend our time reflecting on this morning. So if you haven't found your way to Psalm 62 yet this morning, I ask that you would find your way there—to Psalm 62—and if you're able, stand with me for the reading of God's word. Psalm 62, the word of our Lord,

*[1] For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. [2] He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken. [3] How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence? [4] They only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse. Selah [5] For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. [6] He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. [7] On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God. [8] Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah [9] Those of low estate are but a breath; those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath. [10] Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them. [11] Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God, [12] and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For you will render to a man according to his work. [Psalm 62:1-12]*

“So we thank You, Lord, for the opportunity that is ours to open Your word this morning and allow Your Spirit to speak to us. I pray this morning that through the proclamation of Your word we might be changed, that You might encourage us and exhort us, that You might penetrate our hearts and minds and challenge us to walk more diligently in trusting You day by day.

I thank You for those who have come this morning that will be hearing Your word and contemplating Your word, but yet not understanding You, as ones who have a relationship with You. So we ask that You would do as only You can do; that You would open their eyes to Jesus; that they would see God as a God Almighty, a God all-powerful and a God that pours out His love on those that He has called. So Lord, we ask that You would do that and we ask, Lord, that You would encourage the rest of us as well with Your word.

I ask especially this morning that You would help me to communicate clearly Your words, and even as I struggle with this stuffiness and congestion, that that would not be a hindrance to the proclamation of Your word; that it might be heard clearly and that Your Spirit might work; that we might bring glory to You. We ask this in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.”

You may be seated.

We all face times of trials and difficulties in our lives, and even for some times of treachery and danger. And as if the difficulties and the dangers themselves were not enough, the distress often brought on by inappropriate reactions to the situations that we find ourselves in will lead some into depression and even deeper troubles of the soul. And that is why we need this message, the message of this psalm this morning. We need the biblical instruction concerning the theological truths contained in this portion of scripture to prepare us for the times of trouble that we will inevitably find in our lives.

As I've lived with this psalm over the past couple of weeks, I have grown to appreciate more and more not only its message, but also the emotional response that it has had on my own soul as I've reflected on these truths. As I've studied it and dug deeper into the text, I have been impacted by the inspired imagery used here, both to describe our Lord as well as the experience of a man, as he found himself in the face of great adversity.

In fact, earlier this week as I began to work my way through this psalm and study this passage and begin to come up with an outline to outline the various movements of the psalm and some of the theological truths and biblical counsel contained in it, I sensed that that more detailed outline might actually serve more as a hindrance than a help to us; that it might distract us from the overall thrust and focus of this beautiful song of praise. That is not to say that a detailed outline can't ever serve to help us to remember God's truth and to understand the directives that are contained in these inspired psalms of the faith. However, in this occasion I opted to lay aside the more detailed outline and present something more simple, hopefully allowing us to both feel the emotion of the song as well as be moved by the Spirit of God as we come to understand its message.

What we have before us is a song written by David expressing his confidence in God alone. In fact "God alone" or "only God" is a reoccurring anthem that David sings throughout this song. The Hebrew term for which can be translated "only" or "alone" is not only repeated, but it was placed at the very beginning of at least six lines, four of them in reference to God to emphasize the importance of trusting in God alone. We see this in verses one, two, five and six. If we were to translate those literally using "only" there at the beginning: "only on God does my soul wait"; "only He is my rock"; "only on God does my soul silently wait"; "only He is my rock."

You see, when we enter into times of adversity, our tendency is to trust in God plus something else, whether that something else is actually ourselves or something outside of ourselves; so we need this kind of reminder. And it is not that God never uses people or things to provide the help that we need; He often does. But our trust must remain in Him alone.

David himself was a mighty warrior and understood the importance of using things to help him in the fight, in the battle. But whether he stood behind a rock or lifted up a shield, his ultimate

trust was not in those things, but in God for his protection. We can see that in Psalm 20 verse seven,

*Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. [Psalm 20:7]*

It is not that he would not use chariots and horse, but that his confidence was not in them. His confidence was in the Lord and in all that His name represents. We see this also in Psalm 33 beginning in verse sixteen,

*<sup>[16]</sup> The king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. <sup>[17]</sup> The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue. <sup>[18]</sup> Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love... [Psalm 33:16-18]*

It's not that He doesn't use means to work in our lives, but we need to trust not in the means but in the God who provides them. So as we work our way through this psalm, and as we approach life's difficulties, we need to keep that phrase in mind: "in God alone". We need to keep that at the forefront of our thinking. "Only in God does my soul silently wait."

In fact we can see that emphasis here in the psalm not only in the repetition, but also in the structure of the psalm. Trust in God alone is the major thrust of the entire psalm. Understanding the various forms or structures that were used in Hebrew poetry becomes helpful to us as we seek to interpret the message of these poems that were then set to music. In this psalm, like many others, it takes on the structure whereby two things are set in contrast to one another. Both build up to a major point of emphasis and return from that point in the reverse order, whereby we find the entire poetic structure is set to make one thrust the focal point. Not only is it the focal point at the very center, but it is both at the beginning and end as well.

There is a contrast here. Maybe you could imagine it in this way: it's as if these verses of the song make a point like an arrow. There is a contrast between our God—our all-worthy God, worthy of our trust—and the unworthiness of man. Or we can say it this way: the almighty power of our sovereign God contrasted with the insignificance of those who fight against us. It's as if verses one and two speak of God—of God Almighty, worthy of our trust—and then three and four—man and his ways, in this case our enemy. And then, again the focus is on God at the very center, and then coming back in verses nine and ten on man's insignificance, and finally, in the final verses, on God Himself. "Only in God does my soul silently wait." "He alone is my rock and my salvation."

So we might attempt to state the overall thrust of this psalm by saying something like this: Calmness of soul during times of difficulty and danger is found when our confidence is in God

alone. It speaks of the exclusivity of God as being worthy of our trust in times of adversity, and the calmness of soul that we can experience even in those times if we only learn to trust in Him and in Him alone.

Calmness of soul during times of difficulty and danger is found when our confidence is in God alone. Calmness of soul—rested assurance—calm and confident trust and hope—in the midst of the greatest trials of life. And that’s the experience we all desire, isn’t it? We desire that type of experience, but sadly, even as Christians, many do not sense the calmness of soul in times that are of adversity, but rather they experience restlessness and fear. The problems of life—the difficulties and the dangers—the enemy looks all-powerful and the feeling of helplessness can creep in and seek to steal the joy that we are to have in Christ. We need to be reminded that regardless of how great the difficulties and dangers may be, that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, compared to the power of our Lord. That is why it is essential that we come to truly know God as He is, in order that we might trust in Him for the help that we need.

So now let us look at the psalm together, Psalm 62, verses one through four. We see here, in these first four verses, the help from God alone. The help from God alone. Calmly resting in God during adverse times. Verses one and two,

*<sup>[1]</sup> For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. <sup>[2]</sup> He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken. [Psalm 62:1-2]*

As we begin, we hear David simply declare or exclaim that he is silently waiting on God, the God in who he trusts for help and deliverance.

*For God alone my soul waits in silence ... [Psalm 62:1]*

Your translation may say “truly” or “assuredly my soul silently waits” and if it does, that word “truly” is coming from the same Hebrew term that is repeated elsewhere in the psalm as “only” or “alone”. My soul waits in silence for God alone. Again we see mentioned, there’s an emphasis here on the exclusivity of God as being worthy of our trust and the need to trust in Him alone. He says,

*... my soul ... [Psalm 62:1]*

Here it is used to express “my entire being”. “My entire being silently waits on God”—and for what is he waiting? For what is David waiting? Salvation. Salvation. That is the deliverance from his enemies. Salvation in the Bible can be used to speak of spiritual salvation—the spiritual salvation of our souls—or it can speak of the physical deliverance from an enemy. And in fact, even our spiritual salvation is in reality deliverance, whereby God delivers us from condemnation and the power of sin in our lives. But here in the context, David is referring

more of a physical deliverance, a physical deliverance from his enemies as we will see in verses three and four. In fact, let's jump down there just for a moment.

Let's jump down there first, because I think that better understanding the troubles that David was faced with will help us to feel the impact of what he is saying in the rest of the psalm. Psalm 62 verses three and four,

*[3] How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence? [4] They only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse. [Psalm 62:3-4]*

We understand here in these verses that David was under attack. He was being pursued by those who wished him great harm, and who were deceitful in all of their ways. While we do not know for certain the exact context of which David is writing this song, it is quite possible that he could be referring to a time in his own life when his son, Absalom, conspired to commit treason and to steal the kingdom away from him. And while David was dealing with personal problems of his own, Absalom began to lift himself up in the eyes of the people, and to bring down David through deceptive ways.

Now the difficulty in translating the phrase which makes up the last part of verse three is quite apparent in the way that different translators have attempted to translate this portion of scripture. Verse three says,

*How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence? [Psalm 62:3]*

There is agreement that the beginning of this verse begins with David's cry, but then after that, some attribute the remainder of the verse to David's words about his attacker, or to his attackers, rather. And others seem to take that as rather being a description of David himself and what is being done to David. So then we have David crying out in the verse that follows, and I believe in light of how verse four begins, it is best to understand the second half of verse three as referring to David and what was being done to him. David was crying out, "How long?"

*How long will all of you attack a man to batter him ... [Psalm 62:3]*

Or to slay him—

*... like a leaning wall ... [Psalm 62:3]*

Or—

*... a tottering fence? [Psalm 62:3]*

His cry of “How long?” indicates that this was a prolonged attack, a prolonged time of difficulty and danger in his life. And the reference to David as a leaning wall or tottering fence indicates that the pressure against him was great, and that the attack came at a time when he was either already weak or was becoming weakened, and growing weaker because of the prolonged attack. In fact, in verse four it follows with saying,

*They only plan to thrust him down from his high position ... [Psalm 62:4]*

And so it is with our enemies when they desire to attack us. They attack when we are at our weakest, and they continue to push and push until we are nearly ready to be toppled over the edge. The imagery here is extremely vivid. There’s a prolonged and extreme pressure that is mounted against him at a time when he is weak or being weakened by the attack, and the enemy who wants to bring him down is conspiring with lies against him, even all the while wearing a fake smile and pretending to be his friend.

*[3] How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence?*

*[4] They only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse. [Psalm 62:3-4]*

Hopefully, none of you will ever experience someone pursuing you with the desire to kill you. But if you serve in some type of leadership role, whether that be at work or in the community, it is likely that there will be times when you find yourself under attack, when you’ll be criticized and even slandered. With today’s economic times being what they are, and jobs being more limited, and the competition to keep one’s job even greater than ever before, it is likely that some of you will even experience or have even experienced the pushing and the plotting of others who speak highly of you face to face, and conspire against you to topple you behind your back. If you have ever experienced something like that, you know how much it can hurt to hear the lies, especially when they come from those that you trusted.

Even in ministry there are those times when we can be misunderstood and our motives can be brought into question. Whatever the case, the pain is so much deeper when the attacker or the accuser is someone whom we love or consider a friend. Now with that in mind, I think you can imagine at least to a minimal degree what David could have been feeling. Add to that the severity of his particular situation, and you can start to understand how difficult it would have been for him to experience the treason and the troubles that he was faced with at the time that he penned words to this song.

So now let us jump back up to verses one and two so that we can see how David responded to his circumstances.

<sup>[1]</sup> *For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.* <sup>[2]</sup> *He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken. [Psalm 62:1-2]*

We've already mentioned the importance of the phrase "God alone" as mentioned in this passage. Now let us take a moment to question what David means by the phrase "my soul waits in silence". "My soul waits in silence."

First of all, we know that he's not referring to complete silence or the act of merely not speaking, because we see in verse eight he exhorts the people to pour out their hearts to God in prayer. The idea here, rather, is one of being still before the Lord; a quiet and composed state of being; patiently waiting rather than restlessly complaining before God. It is calmly resting in God during adverse times. It is an uncomplaining submission to God's will by faith to wait patiently on the Lord's deliverance. But we must not misunderstand this, in some way, to think that his trust in the Lord's providence was some type of stoic or fatalistic response, as if he was silently accepting life's circumstances with an attitude of "que sera sera"—"whatever will be will be, and I can do nothing about it so I will just clench my teeth and bear it". No, his emotions are real; his pain is intense; we see that in the psalm. But as we will see, it is a glad submission to the sovereignty of God, because he trusts in the heart of God. He knows the loving character of God and the power of God.

Listen to some of the descriptive words that he uses for God in verse two. He says,

*He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken. [Psalm 62:2]*

First we see here—we should notice the personal pronoun "my". He has a personal relationship, an intimate relationship with God. And then he says "my rock"; "my salvation"; "my fortress" or "my stronghold in defense".

Now we take a look at the context, and we must think about the context in which David would have been. Think of a rock. A rock must have been a great shield for him. Remember in the context David was writing. He was a warrior back in the days when they fought with arrows and spears. To have a rock from which to hide was a marvelous defense. Again he calls God his salvation from where his deliverance would come. And finally he calls God his stronghold or fortress, the idea being a strong defense, a place in which the enemy could not assail against him.

If we had more time, we could expand upon how these images of God would have looked to David by how these terms were used throughout the Old Testament. We don't have time this morning, but the point we need to understand is what David understood: that his help would come from God alone, and that he could rest calmly in God during times of adversity because

he knew God. He knew God as a trustworthy, all-powerful defender and deliverer. Therefore he could declare at the end of verse two,

*... I shall not be greatly ... [Psalm 62:2]*

Or completely,

*... shaken. [Psalm 62:2]*

He may initially be moved about like a tottering fence, but his enemies will not be able to cast him down from his high position. So in verses one through four we see the help from God which results from resting calmly in God during adverse times.

In what much of— this next section is a repetition. He draws out some new insights for us about God. In verses five through eight we hear David again sing the same anthem but with some minor changes.

*<sup>[5]</sup>For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. <sup>[6]</sup>He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. <sup>[7]</sup>On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God. <sup>[8]</sup>Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. [Psalm 62:5-8]*

So here we see the hope in God alone, reaffirming confidence in God at all times. While much of this is a repetition to the first stanza, there are some notable changes that we will want to take a look at this morning. And one change we notice is in the last part of verse five. While in verse one it was salvation or deliverance that David waited for from God, now it is hope or expectation for which he waits.

*For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope ... [Psalm 62:5]*

Or expectation,

*... is from him. [Psalm 62:5]*

David says that not only is God alone his source of help, also He is his source of hope, and we definitely need hope when we are faced with prolonged difficulties and dangers. And so we have the hope in God alone. And while the first portion of the psalm was a declaration, a simple declaration of David's faith, this stanza is written in the form of an exhortation. David begins by exhorting his own soul to silently wait on God alone.

*For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. [Psalm 62:5]*

Like David does here, we need to learn to preach to ourselves, reminding our souls to trust in God alone because of the truths in scripture and what they tell us about God and who He is. So

we can call this also: reaffirming confidence in God at all times. And I take that word “all” from verse eight where we see David not merely exhorting himself, but also exhorting the people to trust in the Lord at all times.

In verse six we see yet another minor difference between the first stanza and the second, between verse two and verse six of the stanzas of this song of David. He has dropped one small word, but that’s significant. No longer does he say that he shall not be greatly or completely shaken as he did in verse two, but rather after exhorting his own soul to wait on God from where his hope is found, now he can boldly proclaim that he will not even be shaken at all. In verse seven he adds “my glory” to “my salvation” in his description of God, and this carries with it the idea of honor. His honor or glory is God alone.

This is especially important to remember when slanderous words may be spoken of against us, for that is when we will become tempted to take matters into our own hands and to try to defend ourselves, but rather we need to trust in God. It is God who is our defense and we must trust in Him to defend us, and also we must be more concerned about His honor and His glory than that of our own.

Again in verse seven, he amplifies his description of God from merely stating “my rock” to stating “my mighty rock” or “the rock of my strength”. And then he makes one additional change describing God with the term “my refuge”. We can see the same idea of being a refuge—God being a refuge—if you look across the page—Psalm 61 and verse three. It says,

*... for you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy. [Psalm 61:3]*

Where is it that you run to take refuge when you’re under attack? Where do you run when the difficulties and dangers of life surround you, where do you seek shelter and protection? Sadly, many Christians run everywhere else before turning to God. We must learn to run to the Lord. We must stop merely listening to ourselves and obeying our own fears, and we must start trusting God, trusting in the Lord; speaking to ourselves in exhortation in order that we might take refuge in God alone.

As I mentioned before, the exhortation doesn’t stop with David preaching to his own soul, but in verse eight he moves to exhort others as well. He says,

*Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. [Psalm 62:8]*

God is not merely a refuge for David, but God is a refuge for us. He sings this song with joy. After reminding his own soul to trust in the Lord, he turns to the people to exhort them as well.

*Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him ... [Psalm 62:8]*

Spill your guts before the Lord. Let Him know how you feel, but take refuge in His shelter; take refuge in Him, for only He alone can be that type of refuge for us.

So we see the help from God alone, resting calmly in God during adverse times; and the hope in God alone, reaffirming confidence in God at all times. And finally in the last four verses, we'll look at the heralding of God alone, rehearsing contrast between God and man.

David's enemies are but mere men and as great as their threat may seem, they are insignificant when compared with God alone. We see this in verses nine through ten.

<sup>[9]</sup> *Those of low estate are but a breath ... [Psalm 62:9]*

A vapor—

*... those of high estate are a delusion ... [Psalm 62:9]*

A lie—

<sup>[9]</sup> *... in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath.* <sup>[10]</sup> *Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them. [Psalm 62:9-10]*

Well, simply put, it really doesn't matter if our practices—it really doesn't matter if one practices the forceful plundering of a low-life thug, or the deceptive extortion of those who use power for personal gain. To put one's hope in such is futile, for in the end when you put them all together on the scales, they weigh less than the air we breathe. Not only do we need to understand the utter weakness and weightlessness of men who may come against us, but also we must not be tempted to trust and hope in our own power or position for personal security when troubles come our way.

*... if riches increase, set not your heart on them. [Psalm 62:10]*

But that really is man's tendency, isn't it? To turn to God when he feels that he absolutely has to? When all of his self-reliant methods finally get stripped away? We need to ask ourselves from where does our help come, and in who is our hope and security found? Is it power? Position? Possessions? Or do we really wait on the Lord who is our salvation, who is our shelter and strength? Man and his methods are nothing compared to God—compared to the God that we serve.

David ends his song with the heralding of God alone, rehearsing contrast between God and man. What's the point? We should neither fear man—we should neither fear him nor trust in him. Only God is worthy of our fear and our faith.

<sup>[9]</sup> *Those of low estate are but a breath; those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath.* <sup>[10]</sup> *Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them.* <sup>[11]</sup> *Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God,* <sup>[12]</sup> *and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For you will render to a man according to his work.* [Psalm 62:9-12]

Where does all this leave David? As we walk through the stanza of this song, we see him move from a declaration to an exhortation and finally to exaltation. As we learn to wait on the Lord and remind ourselves who He is and urge ourselves, urge our souls to hope in Him, we will see Him as He is—so high and lifted up—and it will lead us to worship Him. David turns his speech directly to the Savior.

<sup>[11]</sup> *Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God,* <sup>[12]</sup> *and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For you will render to a man according to his work.* [Psalm 62:11-12]

Almighty power; absolute sovereignty; perfect justice; and full of loving-kindness and mercy, which He chooses to pour out on His people day by day.

Well, there is much more here than we probably have time for this morning, but I want to share something with you. I want to share something with you with the desire to exalt the Lord, and to exhort you to calmly and confidently trust in Him alone. Sometimes I hesitate in sharing a personal experience because I don't want to convey anything that might be misunderstood in such a way that it would exalt me, rather than Jesus, my Lord. So please understand that He is the hero in the story; the One who deserves all glory and praise.

As I mentioned towards the beginning of this text, David was being pursued by men who literally wanted him dead, and except for those who have served in the military among us, that generally will not be the case for most of us. I have never served in the armed forces and have not personally been pursued by men wanting to take my life, but over these past months we have learned at least a little bit about what it can be like to live in a type of war zone; about thugs who use violence, and corrupt leaders who use their own positions to take what is not theirs.

As many of you are well aware, the relatively peaceful time that existed, when our home state was controlled mostly by the corruption of one single drug cartel, all came to an end in December of this past year. The fighting formally had been concentrated at the border, where drug cartels were fighting for control of trade routes into the US; and around the capital of our state, where law enforcement military forces were attempting to tackle the problem; surrounding what has long been known as the drug cartel capital of Mexico. But in December we saw a major change take place.

It started with two men being slaughtered with AK-47's in the town square of M\_\_\_ on Christmas Eve, and followed with the police chief and some other innocent by-standers being murdered in a nearby town while getting on the bus. Soon after that, the M\_\_\_ police station was riddled by machine gun fire and the entire police force of our county walked off the job; being underpaid and outgunned, they were therefore no longer willing to take the risks for them and their family.

That led to a rise in other crimes as local criminals began taking advantage of the situation. Some of you have heard the stories of bodies being hung from an overpass bridge, decapitations, and even one man's face being stitched around a soccer ball and placed for all to see as a warning to law enforcement who might try to stand in their way. Even in our small village the sounds of machine guns became commonplace. In one afternoon the state police shot up a concrete post in front of the church next door and left bullets in the front of our neighbor's house. Of course, even after capturing one of the men they were after, his family was able to buy his freedom before he ever made it to jail.

And I've shared with many of you who have asked, that we remain confident in the power of our sovereign God, who lovingly cares for us day by day. But I know that death will not come one moment before He has ordained it to be. Calmness of soul during times of difficulty and danger is found when we rest confidently in God alone.

But I know that even my saying this can be misunderstood by some as having either a fatalistic, or merely stoic response, which ignores reality and lacks any sense of human emotion. I think it needs to be said: that is, in fact, clearly not the case. Some may misunderstand when they hear somebody talking about trusting in a sovereign God, that somehow they just have checked out from reality, know God's in control, and have no emotions. And I suppose that is why I so much appreciate the sense of emotion that is felt in this song of David, such as when we hear him cry out, "How long? How long will this continue?"

To be honest, I really don't think all that much about my own personal safety. But I am a dad, and I am a husband. I have a daughter living and serving as a volunteer teacher and dorm mom about an hour-and-a-half away in a Christian school for deaf and at-risk children. And there are others that I love dearly in that same city. I love my wife, who at times must travel alone along the highway where even just miles from our house drug cartel members, using counterfeit uniforms, set up what look like a routine military checkpoint, but rather than inspecting for drugs and arms, they were stealing trucks and SUVs and abandoning the vehicles' owners.

Not only do I love and care for my family, but I sense the God-given responsibility that is mine to protect them and shelter them from harm's way. I do not take that lightly. But even in difficult and dangerous times, I know without a doubt that all power belongs to our sovereign

God, that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is control of all things, and that His steadfast love for them even surpasses that of my own. He is the rock of my strength, and God alone is our refuge.

All around us in the villages of Sinaloa, there are young men who are turning to the vain hope and false promises offered to them by the drug cartels, because they feel hopeless. The temporary help out of poverty soon ends in shattered dreams, as many of them will have the photos of their bloody bodies on the covers of the newspaper, after being discarded in the streets.

Of course, you very well may never consider using bloody violence as a way to escape your own difficult circumstances, whatever they may be, but that doesn't mean you won't be tempted to trust in other forms of man's methods, rather than fully resting with confidence in God alone. And it doesn't matter what the difficulties are that you face; how seemingly big or small they are. He desires to work in your life and in your midst; no problem is too big for God's power; no problem is too small for His loving care. And without ignoring the specific context of these words here in the text, the application remains the same, regardless what problems you face. You need to trust in God alone. He is our hope at all times.

And in the spiritual realm we know that we are under attack by the enemy who desires to do harm to us every single day. So we need to learn to trust in God alone, and silently, calmly composed in our spirit, wait upon Him. Man and his self-reliant methods are not worthy of our fear or our faith. Even when blessed with material possessions, we must not allow them to replace God as the object of our trust. In the end it is God who will defend us, and He who will render to each one according to his work in judgment and in reward. May we be motivated to exalt Christ, to exalt our Lord; for He alone is worthy.

*<sup>[11]</sup> Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God, <sup>[12]</sup> and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For you will render to a man according to his work. [Psalm 62:11-12]*

“Lord God, we thank You today for Your word that reminds us of just how trustworthy You are, that reminds us of how You are our defender and deliverer. We all face different problems and struggles in life, some seemingly larger than others. But regardless of what we face, we want You to help us learn to trust in You and place our faith in You, as we go through these times of adversity.

“Lord God, we ask that You would help us as we reflect even on the description—the descriptive words used about You by David in this song, that we might come to know You in a deeper way, that we might see You as You are truly revealed in scripture—because to know You

more deeply is to love You more deeply—and to trust in You with all of our might—to rest confidently in You. That is our desire, Lord.

“You know that at times we can become fearful and restless as we face things which are outside of our control, but we rest confidently in You, Lord, because all things—everything—is under Your control. So we ask that You’d help us to know You better and trust in You all the more, that we might worship You. That in knowing You and trusting in You and resting confidently in who You are, we might be taken aback by just how great and mighty a God we serve. And that we might day by day love You and serve You—most of all worship You—as the God all worthy of all of our praise. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.”