
The Church in Prayer

Victory Life Online

Sunday, September 27, 2020 — Psalm 62 - Waiting for God Alone

Introduction

Faith is not manipulative, nor is faith transactional. Faith is primarily covenant relationship and cooperative obedience. It's building a relationship with God built on trust in His character and His word, and obedient responses to His instructions. Prayer is one of the primary ways that we nurture our relationship with a God we are in covenant with, and one of the primary ways we learn cooperative obedience.

The primary purpose of prayer is not to get God to do what you think He should do. The primary purpose of prayer is relationship, and in that relationship we are transformed. Prayer must be primarily about being *with* God, not primarily about asking (or especially demanding) something *from* God. It is within the context of this relationship that our trust is built and our character transformed that we learn how to pray rightly and live rightly while enacting His will in cooperative obedience.

Psalm 62

Psalm 62:1-12 (ESV)

For God alone my soul waits in silence;
from him comes my salvation.
He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.

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

For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence,
for my hope is from him.
He only is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.
On God rests my salvation and my glory;
my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

Trust in him at all times, O people;
pour out your heart before him;
God is a refuge for us. *Selah*

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.
Put no trust in extortion;
set no vain hopes on robbery;
if riches increase, set not your heart on them.

Once God has spoken;
twice have I heard this:
that power belongs to God,
and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love.
For you will render to a man
according to his work.

Reorientation

Prayer turns to God in the midst of the crisis (assault of hypocritical liars), in a confident trust that God is the one who protects and God is the one who saves. We can put our complete trust in God. Psalm 131 is a Psalm that helps recalibrate us to trust in God, while Psalm 62 help reorientate (recenter) our lives around God. Prayer is for the reorientation of our lives.

Psalm 62 has a basic structure of 5 different sections. Praying through this structure helps reorient us to see that no matter what we are facing or up against, we can trust in God. God is trustworthy. Prayer trains the soul to singleness of focus: fo God *alone*.

First Section:

Trust in God (vs. 1-2)

Second Section:

Actions of the enemies (vs. 3-4)

Third Section:

Trust in God (vs. 5-8)

Fourth Section:

Attributes of humans (vs. 9-10)

Fifth Section:

Trust in God (vs. 11-12)

Psalm 62:1-2 (ESV)

For God alone my soul waits in silence;
from him comes my salvation.
He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.

Waiting means that there is another whom I trust and from whom I receive. While waiting, I discover that there is a reality outside of me that is stronger, more powerful, more trustworthy than what is inside of me. In prayer I am reoriented to be able to respond to it. Waiting forces us to recognize all the areas we try to grasp for control.

Silence is being more interested in what God will say to me than getting out my speech to him. It is a preference for hearing God's word over speaking my word. *Talking* in prayer is essential but it is also *partial*. *Silence* is also *essential*.

“Silence is prerequisite to hearing. In the absence of human sound it becomes possible to hear the *logos*, the word of God that gives shape and meaning to our words.”¹ ~ Eugene Peterson

Psalm 62 is a prayer in the midst of circumstances that causes one to feel greatly shaken, but learning to wait in silence for the salvation that comes only from God. He *alone* is “*my rock and my salvation... my high fortress*” (or “stronghold”). The personal relationship and connection to the character of God is what causes us in prayer to “not be greatly shaken.” While we are patiently waiting for what comes from God, we are content and satisfied in relationship with God.

In prayer, those that seek to assault us will not overwhelm us.

Psalm 62:3-4 (ESV)

How long will all of you attack a man
to batter him,
like a leaning wall, a tottering fence?
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.

It is not just circumstances that have come against us, but enemies that are threatening us. They attack in order to “batter” us, beat us down with repetitive blows. Evil is drawn towards weakness (leaning wall, tottering fence) in order to give it the final push; but it is also drawn to strength out of envy (to pull down from high position) in order to topple it. So evil takes pleasure in deception and lies.

¹ Eugene Peterson, “Where Your Treasure Is,” page 88.

Psalm 11 and 120 are two Psalms that teach us what to do in the midst of lies and deceptions.

The question is asked, "How long?" In prayer, we bring ourselves, battered and leaning, before the Lord and say, "Enough is enough." We look at evil and ask "How long?" But what is the answer?

Confident Hope

Psalm 62:5-8 (ESV)

For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence,
for my hope is from him.
He only is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.
On God rests my salvation and my glory;
my mighty rock, my refuge is God.
Trust in him at all times, O people;
pour out your heart before him;
God is a refuge for us.

The near exact repetition of verse 1 and 2 moves from testimony to exclamation. There is an unqualified assurance in the character of God, that He is trustworthy in the midst of trials.

The slight change in verse 5 from verse 1 is small but important. In verse 1, we are waiting in salvation for the salvation that comes from God. Salvation is a recognition of God's past actions of salvation, God's history of saving His people, and silently but expectantly waits for that history to come into the present. God is a saving God; He has worked in the past in saving His people, He will work in the present for salvation.

But in verse 5, salvation becomes hope. Salvation deals with the past and the present, but hope deals with the future. In prayer, we cultivate the trust that our future is safely in God's hands. God's future work of salvation is anticipated in prayer while we silently wait. In the maturity that comes from this prayerful waiting in silence, "greatly" has been removed from "shaken."

The personal relationship with God is deepened in prayer. The silent waiting is not biding time, hoping that God will act. It is the time we know intimately the character and nature of God: on God rests "my salvation" and "my glory" (honor, dignity), "my mighty rock" and "my refuge" is God.

In verse 8, the exclamation expands to exhortation: you can *trust* God and *pour out your hearts* in prayer before Him, He is a *refuge* and place of safety. Yes, there is a place for words in prayer. Yes, there is a place for being honest and unpretentious before God. We pour out our heart before *Him*, not vomit our hearts out on anyone who will act like they listen. It is pouring our heart out before Him that we are cultivating the intimacy with Him we are longing for.

You need people in your life that will listen and encourage you to pour out your heart before God. He is your refuge. Pouring our heart before Him is like an offering, and then we wait in silence for our salvation and hope.

Humans are Nothing

Because God is our protection, human beings are no real threat.

Psalm 62:9-12 (ESV)

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.
Put no trust in extortion;
set no vain hopes on robbery;
if riches increase, set not your heart on them.

Humans and their actions are only a *breath* or *puff of air*. There is nothing to them, *lighter than a breath*. From those of “low estate” up to “high estate,” it’s using the polar opposites of status in society as a way of saying “and everyone in between.” Those positions and any position is “*hevel*.” That word is used mainly in the book of Ecclesiastes, and is translated “vanity,” or “meaningless,” or “transient.” It’s a word-picture of a “puff of smoke or air.” Like smoke, it is transient and fleeting. Our positions in society are nothing substantial. Ultimately before God and eternity, they are transient, fleeting, even meaningless. Those of *high estate*? They are a lie, a *delusion*: they look substantial, but are not in reality.

It’s not that these things, such as power or social structures, don’t matter. It’s that they do not define reality or dictate our relationship with God. They are not what makes life of any substance. The character of God, that we can trust, is what is substantial.

“We do not gain significance by flaunting our victimization or parading our trophies. Tragedy is not proof of significance; accomplishment is not proof of significance. Glorification of victims is as much out of place as adulation of winners. We are only ourselves when we are in a trust relationship with God, defined and commanded by His word, participating in His power.”² ~ Eugene Peterson

The exhortation we are given is not to trust in crime (robbery), in power (extortion), or in wealth (riches). It’s not that we could not have power or wealth, we are just encouraged to “set not your hearts” on these things. Wealth amassed in general is not worth putting our trust in, but even more so when it is gained illegitimately. Power, wealth, nor control are the ground we stand on, but the ground we stand on is our trust in God.

² Eugene Peterson, “Where Your Treasure Is,” page 92-93.

Power and Love

God speaks, it's heard repeatedly: God is both strong (*power belongs* to him) and is committed to covenant love (*steadfast love / hesed*). To be safe in the midst of trial and crisis, God must be these to us. We have to be confident in His power and His "steadfast love." He is committed to His covenant. This is what nurtures trust and faith — "faith is covenant relationship."

Love without power is just sentiment and feeling. Power without love is brutal. You cannot properly have one without the other. God is committed to His covenant.

God's power and covenant love is not just what gives us safety and protection, but also uniquely qualifies Him to *judge* everyone properly. God has the power and love to even up the ways of the world. Everyone will receive their just rewards, implying the one praying would be rescued and the enemies punished. (Romans 2:6)

In the midst of assault that makes the one praying be weak and leaning, the one praying knows better than to turn to people for help. We must see that our help does not come from circumstances of this world. They are insubstantial and can provide no aid. The only hope is God. We must learn to wait in silence.

Jesus

Luke 12:15 (ESV) And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

Nurturing hope is what allows us to trust Him in the midst of chaos and confusion, the dark nights of the soul. In a time we see all sorts of power grabs and people vying for truth, we cannot occupy ourselves with these matters. We must wait for God alone. He works in and through His people. We are not called to say and do nothing, but we must first learn to wait for Him alone.

1 Peter 4:3-5 (ESV) For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but **they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.**

Our responsibility is to learn how to trust God first and then we can act. At the end, God makes all of this right. Jesus is the only righteous, powerful and loving judge who knows how to judge correctly.

Revelation 19:1-2,4-6 (ESV) After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants." And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell

down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" And from the throne came a voice saying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great." Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

Conclusion:

God reigns. He is sovereign and in charge, whether we see it or not. This is all about His kingdom. We have seen this truth present over and over again through this series.

Psalm 46

When all hell breaks and the world is falling apart, we can be still and know that He is God.

Psalm 110

God is at work through Jesus. Jesus is the one who is the king and the priest. He makes us right and He rules.

Psalm 133

If we are actually living for His kingdom, then we live in community and cultivate the kind of unity that comes from God to bring the kingdom through us. Unity in community commands the blessing, so that we can be a blessing to the world around us.

Psalm 131

We must nurture a trustful relationship with Him. These problems are often too big for us to handle, so we must calm and quiet our souls. We must get to know His heart and be in relationship for the sake of relationship.

Psalm 62

We can trust Him. At the end, He is only one with the power and love to judge righteously. He reigns! We must stay on solid ground, no matter what we see.

Faith is trusting Him and walking in obedience. When we obey, we are saying we trust His heart. God is the only one who can fix what is broken, save what has been lost, and heal what has been destroyed. We wait in silence because our Hope comes from Him.