

Of Fear and Faith

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[0 : 00] Psalm 56. Let me read the psalm to you and then let's just consider what this psalm has to say to us today.

I'm going to skip the introduction because I'm going to come back to that. Let me begin with verse 1. Be gracious to me, O God, for man has trampled upon me. Fighting all day long he oppresses me. My foes have trampled upon me all day long, for they are many who fight proudly against me. When I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I have put my trust. I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me? All day long they distort my words. All their thoughts are against me for evil. They attack. They lurk. They watch my steps as they have waited to take my life.

Because of wickedness, cast them forth. In anger, put down the peoples or these peoples, O God. You have taken account of my wanderings. Put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?

[1 : 38] Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call. This I know, that God is for me. In God, whose word I praise. In the Lord, whose word I praise. In God, I have put my trust.

I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me? Your vows are binding upon me, O God. I will render thank offerings to you. For you have delivered my soul from death.

Indeed, my feet from stumbling. So that I may walk before God in the light of the living. Psalm 56. Have you ever been so scared? So fearful that the expression scared out of your wits applies.

You ever had that kind of experience? Just scared to death would be another expression that we have. Fearful. Fearing. Scared.

[2 : 45] Terrified. Maybe some other words that we could use to describe it. You know the emotion. You know the feeling. It's pretty common, isn't it? In fact, fear can be and often is if unchecked, undealt with.

Fear can be one of the most crippling emotions that we experience as human. Fear can be one of the most crippling emotions that we experience as human beings. And I heard about a little boy, a little five-year-old boy who was asked by his mommy to go to the pantry and retrieve for her a can of tomato soup.

And so the little five-year-old boy just stood there and his mama said, What's the matter? Son? Go into the pantry. Get the tomato soup for me.

And so he walked over to the pantry and he looked in there and he said, But mommy, it's dark in there. And it's scary to me.

And she said, Well, son, don't you know that Jesus is in there? Jesus is in there. He'll take care of you. And so he walked over to the pantry door and he looked in and he said, Jesus, are you in there?

[4 : 01] A little pause. Jesus, would you hand me a can of tomato soup? You know, little boys and I assume little girls because we don't have a little girl, but I can assume that little girls are afraid of the dark, just like little boys, though our boys are not afraid of the dark anymore.

And even if Jonathan was afraid of the dark, I wouldn't tell you about that this morning since it would embarrass him. But darkness is a fearful thing, isn't it? And the sources of our fear are many.

Darkness is one of those. Disease, health issues. We can become very fearful about the possibility or maybe even the reality of some of the diseases that we may deal with or health issues we may deal with.

And there's fear associated with those things. And darkness is fearful. And the unknown is fearful. We like to know what's ahead of us, you know.

We like to know what's out there. We're fearful of those things that we cannot see. Death is something that is a source of fear. We fear death, don't we?

[5 : 25] Let's just be honest with one another. I think it was Billy Graham who said, It's not death I fear, it's just dying I fear. And maybe that is true of all of us.

And maybe, hopefully, if you name the name of Jesus and you're born again child of the king and you know where you're going when you die, that it's not necessarily death you fear, but just the process of dying that you fear.

What is it you fear? You fear failure? Fear economic disaster? I would say that over the past couple of years, that kind of fear has gripped most Americans and even God's people.

The fear that our economy is going to collapse. Do you fear terrorism? Certainly a major source of our fears over the last several years, since 9-11.

What do you fear? I remember my last trip to Ukraine. It was a solo trip. And I'm not real keen on flying, period.

[6 : 34] There's just something about it that's unsettling. No matter how many times you fly, there's just a part of it that is fearful. And I will never forget, though, my trip home.

Flying over the ocean. This has been several years after 9-11, but, you know, terrorism and planes being crashed into buildings.

And you think about those things when you fly now. We can't get that out of our minds. And here I am, flying back from Ukraine, flying over the ocean. And my seat assignment was the very last seat in the plane.

And right behind me was kind of a little hallway, and the bathrooms were back there. And so a lot of people would be coming and going and going to the restroom.

Well, there was this fellow on the plane of Middle Eastern descent, which is a terrible thing, really, to have a suspicion of an entire race of people and shame on us.

[7 : 40] But here he comes, and he doesn't go to the restroom. He just stands right behind me. And he just stands there. Do you know what's going through my mind?

I can honestly say over the last several years that I can honestly say that that event in my life was the most fearful thing for me.

I'm not really a fearful person. I don't get afraid very often. And yet that fellow standing behind me terrified me. And I had all kinds of imaginations about what he was going to do to me and, you know, and take over the plane and maybe had other associates.

Isn't that terrible? And we live in that kind of culture now, that kind of mindset. We can't escape that. And so we have these fears that grip us and fears that render us immobile sometimes.

And we are scared. We fear all kinds of things. We fear the devil, you know. We have a fear of the devil. It's all right to have a healthy fear or concern about him, but not fear of the devil.

[8 : 56] And yet we do fear him. And I guess we fear man, don't we? And as Christians, because we are strangers in this world, because we're believers, we're not at home here.

And so we're in a strange place, in a sense. And being in a strange place has attached to it emotions of fear and anxieties.

And even though Sherry and I and Jonathan are glad to be here and glad to be moved in, we are still in a strange land. And there are anxieties associated with that and fears.

And I know that you're going to do your very best, and many of you are already doing your very best, to kind of accommodate that and to help us and to reassure us and help us to fit in and maybe remove all of those kind of anxieties and fears.

But the bottom line is we deal with fear. David had a season of fear. Though the psalm itself does not really give us the details of this fear or source of fear, the psalm itself, that is, does not.

[10 : 12] But the heading to the psalm does. David went through a time of fear. I mean sheer terror. He feared death.

Death at the hands of the Philistines. And we'll get to that here in just a moment. But in that time of fear that he experienced, he learned, he discovered some things about God.

And he discovered some things about his faith in God. And he discovered that you deal with fear through faith. Through faith.

And that's what the psalm is all about. And in order for us to understand the psalm, we've got to understand the situation. We've got to understand the occasion that David was experiencing, that was the ground for, the impetus for the psalm in the first place.

And we get that from the heading. And so I want you to notice the heading before we look at the psalm. The heading reads this way. For the choir director.

[11 : 24] According to Jonas Elam Rahukin. A victim of David. When the Philistines seized him in Gath.

Now that's a rather long introduction for a psalm. You don't normally have those at the heading of the psalm. And by the way, in case you're wondering, the people who published your Bible did not put that heading there.

That's part of the inspired scripture. And so we need to take that as inspired. And it's been included there with the psalm for our instruction.

And in this case, it doesn't just identify who wrote the psalm like many of the headings do. It helps us understand the occasion for the psalm.

The first thing we learn. Well, not the first thing. Because I want to take it from the end and go back. We discover that this is, in a sense, a prison psalm.

[12 : 28] Now, I don't know if David wrote it while he was in captivity. Like Paul wrote many of his letters while he was in captivity. And so we have the prison epistles. I don't know that David was in captivity when he wrote the psalm.

But the things that he learned that became the substance of the psalm occurred when he was in prison. Albeit for a short period of time.

Held captive by the Philistines. And we learn that from the heading. So this is a prison psalm. It is also, he says, a mictum. And what is that?

Some of you might have a translation that translates it a golden psalm. The word mictum could be translated atonement.

An atonement psalm. Atonement, or it could be translated, maybe more accurately translated, a cutting. A cutting of David.

[13 : 31] Now, that's kind of interesting, isn't it? And that is what the word means. A cutting of David. That means that David is saying, and he wrote several psalms, by the way.

I think five in all in the psalms are mictum psalms. David is saying to his choir director, this is a very important psalm. And it's been cut in stone, in a sense.

It's been etched. It's a cutting of David. It's one of the golden, that's why it's sometimes translated golden psalm. That means, don't lose this one.

And we're going to sing this one from now on. It is kind of like in the Baptist hymnal. It would be victory in Jesus to Baptists. Our Baptist anthem.

Victory in Jesus. And this is David saying, this is a very important psalm. The occasion out of which this psalm was written was a very important time in my life.

[14 : 31] And so this is a cutting. It is a golden psalm. Choir director, you better treat this one well. And God's people, let's sing it over and over again.

Because you see, David learned something during his captivity. Learned something about God.

During his captivity, he was gripped with fear. It was good reason.

And we'll explain that here in just a minute. And gripped with fear, and David learned to respond to the fear in faith. And he wrote a psalm about it. Sing it, God's people.

Keep on singing it. Choir director, put it in the favorites book. Sing it over and over again. A victim of David. And then we have this string of Hebrew words.

Transliterated into the English. And the words make no sense to us. It's not making sense to me.

Other than I have allowed a commentator help me translate it.

[15 : 37] And it has been variously translated. But basically, the message is this. A silent dove in distant places. Now, that will bless your heart, won't it?

See, the psalm has a title. That's the title for the psalm. The song or the silent dove in a distant place or a distant land.

Something like that. That's the title. You see, that describes David's life. In that time in his life.

When he was not yet the bonafide official king of Israel. And a time in his life when he was always on the run. Fleeing from Saul on the one hand.

Primarily from Saul. King Saul. Whose kingdom had been ripped from him. And given to David. And yet David was not the official king yet.

[16 : 39] And so here's David running for his life. Because Saul is seeking to kill him. And then we learn that he is in gas. Not his home.

Dangerous place for David. And he's like a lonesome dove. Lonesome dove. Silent dove.

In a distant land. Away from God's presence in a sense. Way from his home. Away from his family.

Away from church. I guess we could even say. A silent dove in a distant place. Interesting, isn't it? And yet you really do need to know. What was going on in his life. When he wrote this psalm. And so I want you to turn to 1 Samuel. Chapter 21.

[17:39] Now this is all introduction by the way. 1 Samuel chapter 21. And find verse 10. The Bible is going to describe for us.

The event. That produced such fear in David's life. Out of which. Out of this event.

This experience. David learned. Something about God. Wrote about it in the psalm. 1 Samuel 21 verse 10.

Says then. David arose and fled that day from Saul. He's fleeing Saul. Saul's trying to kill him. And went.

To Achish. King of. Where? Do you see it? Gas.

[18:39] Of all places. That ring a bell with you? About gas. Do you know anybody who came from gas? In the Bible?

Come on now. Goliath. Thank you. Thank you Wes. Now I heard the rest of you too. Okay. Goliath came from gas.

Didn't he? Anything significant. About Goliath and David? Remember anything about that? I believe it was a young lad.

Named David. Shepherd boy. Who with a sling. Five smooth stones. But he only needed one. Because with the power of God.

David slew. The giant Goliath. Goliath from gas. Goliath. The Philistines. Champion. Their celebrated son.

[19:40] Their great warrior. And here this. Young upstart. Little lad. Little shepherd boy. Kills their champion. And so David is fleeing from Saul.

And where does he go? Of all places. Gath. Now I don't know. I just question the wisdom of that. And I didn't read it. But just a few verses before this.

We find that David has been given. Saul. A Goliath sword. And so. Here is David. Waltzing into gas. And he has Goliath sword. Come on now. Is this smart? Now. Now. The Bible doesn't tell us here. That Achish. Imprisoned David. We know that. From the psalm. Psalm 56. We know that. Explicitly. But it is also implied.

[20:37] If you look down there. Verse 14. Achish says to his servants. Why do you bring him to me? And so. It is clear. That David has been. Is being held captive.

Here in the city of Gath. Hometown of Goliath. Whom David had slain. With a rock.

And now David has in his possession. Goliath sword. And he's imprisoned there. I just try to picture this. Try to imagine.

What it might have been like. And. And. And I think we'll discover. That David. Was in the. Grip of. Fear. Being held captive. Maybe house arrest.

Maybe in some prison cell. We don't know. The Bible doesn't tell us. But he is being held captive. Clearly. And. I can just. Imagine. With my.

[21:35] Sanctified imagination. Not trying to add anything. To the text. But just imagining. That. There were certainly. People. In. Gath. Who were relatives. Of.

The giant. Goliath. And. Not only relatives. But friends. Of Goliath. Maybe some of the guards. Who were. Pacing up and down. Outside the door.

The cell door. Of David. Were talking out loud. And. Maybe. Discussing. What they were going to do. To this David. For killing their friend. Goliath.

Killing their mentor. Goliath. Killing their champion. Goliath. And. How they cannot wait. To see. This. David. Put to death. And so.

Here you are. I mean. If you're David. And you're inside this cell. And you can't get out. And you hear all this talk. Outside the door. And you're in Gath. And you. Have been found. In your possession.

[22:29] The sword. Of Goliath. What a fearful. Time. Now. How do we know. That David was afraid. Well let's read on.

And we'll discover. What David. Did to. Gain his freedom. David. Took these words. To heart. Excuse me. I skipped a verse.

Verse 11. But the servants. Of Achish. Said to him. Is. This not. David. The king. Of the land. Did they not. Sing. Of this one. As they. Dance.

Saying. Saul. Has slain. His thousands. And David. His ten thousands. Certainly. They did sing. About that. Didn't they. David. Took these words. To heart. And greatly. Feared. Achish. King of Gath. And so. This is what he did. So he disguised. His sanity. Before them. And acted. [23 : 23] Insanely. In their hands. And scribbled. On the doors. Of the gate. And let his saliva. Run down. Into his beard. Isn't this strange?

I mean. This is King David. This is. Warrior David. Here's the one. Who said. I don't need. Your armor. Saul. What right. Does this. Uncircumcised. Philistine. Have. To blaspheme. The name. Of the living God. And he went out there. In his shepherd clothing. With a staff. And his. And his sling. And five smooth stones. And he went out. Against. Goliath. He didn't just go out there. And wait for Goliath. To come. He went out. After him. And. No fear. And here he is. In prison. In. In. Gath.

[24 : 20] And his. Method of escape. Is to act like. A madman. Can you picture this? I mean. He's. Drooling. And it's just running down. His beard. And he's scribbling. We can just kind of picture. What he was doing. And so they bring him. To Achish. And. Said he's a madman. And you know. And Achish. Releases. Out of this experience. That David. Learned. Something. About God. And his. Faith in God. He learned. Something. About fear. And how. To deal. With fear. I think.

In a sense. We. Need to understand. That David. Realized. That he had acted. In a. Very. Unbecoming. Way. For the.

[25 : 14] Unofficial. King. But future. King. Of Israel. And in that experience. He learned. The proper. Response.

To fear. Is faith. What did he learn? Well. Three things. David. Discovered. Or he remembered. Rather. Maybe we ought to use. The word. Remember. And this is. What we ought to remember. When we're gripped. With fear. David. Remembered. These three things. About God. And his faith. In God. He remembered. That God. Is. A. Faithful. God. First thing. He remembered. And we need. To remember. That our God. Is a. Faithful. God. Faithful.

[26 : 09] Faithful. Faithful. To the end. Faithful. Even when we're not. Faithful. And David. Was gripped. With fear. In prison. And his. Only. Plan. Of action. Was to act.

Like an idiot. Act. Like some. Insane. Person. So that he. Could. Be released. Not a very. Faithful. Thing. To do. He learned.

That the. Proper. Way. Is to remember. That God. Is faithful. And God. Will deliver. Our God. Is a faithful. God. The first.

Few verses. Verses. One through. Four. Teach us. This. On the one hand. We have. David. Singing about.

Or writing. Words. To the song. To sing about. His foes. His. Many foes. And listen. You and I. Have many foes. In this life. As well. You could.

[27 : 03] Because you see. David. Was not only. The silent dove. In a distant land. But we too. Are silent doves. In a distant land. We're not of this world.

We are sojourners. Through this world. Like Abraham said. He was looking. For a city. Whose builder. And maker. Was God. And that this is not. Our home. And so we're living.

Here. In this temporary place. Sojourning. And those. We live with. The world. The unborn. Unredeemed. The unsaved. Are. Our enemies.

In a sense. And so. Not only is. David. That silent dove. But so are we. And so.

We need to remember. Like he remembered. That God. Is faithful. In these days. No matter. What you face. No matter. What kind of fears. You may. Succumb to.

[27 : 59] God. Is faithful. Don't ever. Forget that. And so. Here is. David. Opening up. The psalm. By. Really. In a sense. Talking directly. To God. Certainly. Directly. God. Be gracious.

Or. Merciful. To me. Oh. God. For. Man. Has. Trampled. Upon. Me. By the way.

The word. Man. There. Is. The Hebrew. Word. Enosh. It's. A. General. Word. For. Man. And so. He's saying. That. All. Man. Is. Against. Me. And that.

Certainly. Was. David's. Experience. At least. That's. What. He. Sents. Everybody's. Against. Me. He. Was. A. Man. On. The run. Saul. Is. Against. Me. And. All. Of. His. Army. Now.

I'm. Here. In. Gath. And. Achish. And. The. Philistines. They're. Certainly. Against. Me. Man. Is. Against. Me. Enosh. Is. Against. Me. Be. Merciful. Unto.

[28 : 52] Me. God. Be. Faithful. To. Me. We. Could. Insert. That. Word. That's. The. Idea. That's. The. Implication. And. He's. Saying. That. Man. Is. Trampling.

Upon. Me. I. Have. To. Say. That. The. King. James. Version. Translates. The. Word. Better. Than. The. New. American. Standard. Some. Of. You. Might. Have. The. King. James. There. But. The. Word. Is. Translated. There. Swallow. Me. Up. Ever.

Feel. Sometimes. That. Maybe. In. Your. Set. Of. Circumstances. Maybe. It's. Just. A. Season. Of. Time. And. You. Don't. Seem. To. Have. A. Friend. In. The. World. And. And.

There. Are. Those. Who. Are. Criticizing. You. And. Persecuting. You. And. There. Are. All. Kinds. Of. Fears. On. Every. Hand. Maybe. They. Have. Names. Maybe. They. They. They. They. They.

[29 : 47] They. Half.

And that's exactly what the word means. In fact, it's a very descriptive word. It describes a ravenous lion who with one bite just, and you're gone, just swallow you up.

And this is how David felt. Saul's against him and he's fleeing from him. And now he's in Gath and taken into captivity. And I can just, again, sense him in that prison, hearing all of the talk and wondering, even if he doesn't hear them, wondering what they're saying, what they're devising out there and planning to do to him.

And it's like he's just being swallowed up by all of his enemies. David is singing about his foes and he's crying out to God for mercy.

Fighting all day long, he oppresses me. You may be referring directly to Saul. Saul, my foes have, and here it is again, swallowed me up all the day long.

[31 : 10] For they are many who fight proudly against me. And that is the idea that my enemies are coming against me and seeking to put me down and put me out and to swallow me up.

And they think they're in the right. I tell you, we Christians in this land today, if we live according to God's word, we're in the right.

And yet when we live according to God's word, we have persecutions on every hand. And our persecutors think they're right. Those who would like to squelch biblical Christianity think they're standing on solid ground and standing on some solid principles.

And so they're very prideful about it. David felt this way. They're out there wanting to kill me and they think they're in the right. I mean, after all, I killed their champion.

Fear. Fear is gripping him. He has his foes there. And God is faithful. And he is calling out for God to have mercy upon him. And then this maxim for life.

[32 : 21] When I'm afraid, I will put my trust in you. That stands right at the center of these few verses.

It is kind of the central theme. It's the conclusion that David is coming to when he considers his foes. And they are many. In fact, it seems to him that everyone is against him.

And his fear has gripped him. And we come to this maxim for life. This is what he discovered or rediscovered. That when I'm afraid, or as I memorized it and all of our boys have memorized it, what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

In fact, I have fond memories about that verse when Sherry and I and the family, we were visiting Poplar Bluff, home of my parents then. And we had gone down to the lake, Lake Wapapello there. And just kind of roaming around. The boys were kind of doing their thing. And Timothy, our second born, kind of got off by himself and got lost. We were frantic. We didn't know where he was.

[33 : 31] And we're looking everywhere. And Sherry's whistling. By the way, you'll learn that Sherry whistles for her boys. Sometimes even for her husband. And we all know that whistle.

You know, we come running. And so she's whistling and we're calling. And pretty soon down a little, kind of a little gravel road, here comes Tim walking in, as Sherry would describe it, tears out to here. And I think he was whistling or singing, something like that. Make the story short, he testified that he remembered this verse.

What time I am afraid. I will trust in thee. It's a maximum for life. Because you see, God is faithful. And if you discover anything in the grip of fear.

Whatever the source of the fear may be. If you discover anything, and hopefully you will, discover that God is a faithful God.

[34 : 33] And what time you are afraid, you can trust in Him. And He says, there in verse 4, or verse 3, when I'm afraid, I will put my trust in you.

In God, whose word I praise. In God, I have put my trust. Now, I read those phrases together, because it's very significant.

The word trust, trust, there in verse 3, the latter part of verse 3, part of that maximum of life. I will put my trust in you.

Because of the future tense of the verb, it's talking about hope. It's, I put my hope in you. We could translate it that way.

I put my hope, I will put my hope in you. So, whatever comes, whatever time I might be afraid, and no matter when out in the future, from this point on, I find myself in the grips of fear, I will hope in you.

[35 : 47] You see, really, hope is just faith based upon the faithfulness of God in the future. That's what hope is. Hope and faith really are very much alike.

In fact, it would be difficult to, to make a distinction in their definition from the Christian point of view. But, the difference between faith, from hope, from faith is that hope is faith for the future.

And so, David says, I will hope in you. And then, in verse 4, he says, or verse 4, yeah, in God, I have put my trust.

You see the difference between the two? That's faith for right now. Faith for now. Faith for the future.

And right in the middle of those two is this phrase, in God whose word I pray. See, this is a lesson we need to learn and not ever miss.

[36 : 49] Don't ever lose sight of this. Hope and faith. Hope for the future. Faith for the present. is not grounded in some kind of emotional feeling.

Not grounded even in some kind of experience in the past. Well, God did it this way then. He'll do it this way in the future. It's not necessarily, it's not based upon anything external or internal right here.

Faith and hope are grounded in God's word. His word. For David, God had promised that he would be king of Israel. And so here he is, you know, it's just a fort light has come on.

He's in prison and he thinks he's going to die at any moment and he's gripped with fear and he devises his plan to get out of it and yet he should have remembered all along that God had promised, given his word, that he would be king of Israel and so there wasn't any way the Philistines were going to kill him.

we have God's word too about many things. Can we trust his word?

[38 : 02] Don't place a hope in something God will do that he's never promised in his word. Don't rest in a faith here in the present, a faith in God doing something or being something or promising something that you don't find in his word.

Hope and faith are grounded in God's word that he will keep. God's word and his name are the same. You can't make a distinction between God's word and his person and his name.

They are the same. His word is his bond. And that's not some trite little promise that sometimes we use and break. God will never break his word. And you can trust him.

So it's pointless to fear, isn't it? We need to remember the faithfulness of God. Our God is a faithful God. I shall not be afraid, David said.

I will not be afraid. What can mere man do to me? What can flesh and blood do to me? All right, so our God is a faithful God.

[39 : 18] Number two, he remembered, whether it was in the prison cell or after he escaped through a very shameful method, I think, he remembered that our God is a mindful God.

that means God knows what's going on in your life. God is faithful. God is mindful.

Look at what he says there in verse five. All day long, they distort my words. All their thoughts are against me for evil. Their attack, they attack, they lurk, they watch my steps as they have waited to take my life because of wickedness.

Cast them forth in anger. Put down the peoples, oh God. See, David begins by again reciting what they are doing to me.

And he's reciting these things as if somehow God does not know. And he does know. Because the key to this section of the psalm is in verse eight where he says, you have taken account of my wanderings or my trials.

[40 : 41] That stands right center. Just like the maximum for life stands center there in those few verses that speak of the faithfulness of God.

Verse eight sits right there in the center of this section of the psalm where David is remembering that God is a mindful God. That means he knows what's going on in my life.

He's keeping a record of these things. In fact, that's exactly what he says. He says, you have taken account of my wanderings. Keeping a record, keeping an account of it.

Have you ever thought about that? That throughout your afflictions as a believer, your sorrows, your grieving, your hurts, your pains, your experiences of fear, your experiences of persecution, all of the trials that you've gone through because of the wickedness of this world system, inspired by the devil, that each event, each time you experience these things, God is writing those things down.

I mean, from our point of view, from a man's point of view, I don't think God has to write it because he remembers these things. But just the thought of that, and this is what David is remembering in this experience of fear.

[41 : 58] And what you and I need to remember when we experience fear, that God knows what's going on. He's keeping an account.

And not only that, David says, put my tears in your bottle. This is, what a, what a incredible thought. In fact, they really did have tear bottles back in those days. I mean, really, little earthen little bottles, and this is what they would do, this was the custom.

If someone was sick, afflicted, on their deathbed, they would take these little bottles and catch their tears as they would be crying because of their affliction, because of their sufferings.

They would collect them in that little bottle, the name of which has escaped me at this moment. It has some big long name, but you're going to forget that name anyway. I have.

[43 : 08] But it's a little prayer bottle. Let's just call it a prayer bottle. Or tear bottle, rather. And then when, if, and when the person dies, the bottle is buried with them.

That's kind of a strange custom, not something you're going to find prescribed in God's word, but it was a custom of the day. And so David is drawing upon that, some think, some scholars think, and the whole idea that in the midst of my afflictions, and the tears flow, and the tears were flowing in David's life, not just in this one event where he is held captive in gas, but in much of his life, as a matter of fact, even after he became king, and the problems he had with Absalom, and the tears that were shed during that experience as his son, not only tried to take his throne from him, but also tried to have him killed.

It seemed like every step of the way, David is under great affliction, and he's crying, and the thought, the glorious thought that God is capturing every one of those tears in a bottle, people, the idea being that God does not forget these things, and he even says, you have written these things in your book, haven't you God?

So, God has a ledger, he has a tear bottle, he's keeping books, now he does keep books, by the way, I hope your name is written in one of those books, I don't know, you know, he's not trying to teach a theology here, he's trying to convey the awesome thought that through your trials, and through your fears, God is keeping track of those things, and he remembers them, he's mindful of them, and this whole litany of examples of what his tormentors are doing to him, David does not have to recite them to God, God is keeping a record of all of those things, you can be sure of that, God, our God is a mindful God, and my enemies will turn back in the day when I call, this I know, I love this verse, this I know, God is for me, God is for me, Paul quoted that, didn't he, in a sense, that God before me, or for us, who can be against us, what can mere man do to us, you see, in God whose word I praise, there's the word again, God's word, I praise his word, in the Lord, whose word I praise, he's almost being redundant, it's based upon God's word, that he knows that God is mindful of his circumstances, in God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid, what can man do to me, and then one final thing David remembered, he remembered that our

[46 : 30] God is a faithful God and you need to remember that, I need to remember that, no matter what comes, no matter what you face, even if you face those things as a result of your own unfaithfulness, God is still faithful, and our God is a mindful God, he knows, not just as a casual observer, he knows in that he is keeping a record of it, but thirdly, our God is a powerful God, he's a powerful God, and his power manifests itself through several different ways, and it's interesting what David begins with, your vows, he says verse 12, your vows are binding upon me, O God, I will render thank offerings to you, and what does that have to do with the power of God?

The power of God is expressed through, functions through several things, one, God's power operating through David's commitment to God, his duty to him, I think we can read between the lines here that when David was in prison, there in Gath, fearing death, that when David was there,

he made some promises to God, you ever made any promises to God?

God, God, God, God, God, God, I think it's okay to do that. Some would argue that you shouldn't, if you mean it, and evidently, his promise was, God, I will never forget your deliverance of me, and I will praise you for the rest of my life.

Thank you. I will no longer be an ungrateful servant of yours, but we'll be thankful and praise you, and that's what he promised.

He said, your vows are binding. By the way, if you're going to make promises, you'd better keep them. David made a promise here, and he said, they're binding.

[49 : 06] and he praised him. God's power operated through that for him. His power also operates through his deliverance of us.

Now, that, to me, is where I would begin. I would begin there, God's power and deliverance, but David didn't begin there. He began with his commitment, his duty to God.

God's power was going to rest on him so long as he kept his vows to God, his commitment to him.

But then God is also manifesting his power through his deliverance. For you have delivered my soul from death, indeed, my feet from stumble.

And then one last thing, and I'll be finished. his power through devotion. See, he's sandwiched between two things, two commitments on the part of David to keep his promises to God, to be loyal to God, to keep his commandments, to keep his promises to God, and on the other end, his devotion to God.

[50 : 30] those are the two pieces of bread between the meat of it and that God's power is manifested through his deliverance of David.

He delivers him, delivers him, delivers him, delivers him. David said, so that I may walk before God. Listen, folks, this is the best part of the entire song.

all of this experience David had, his captivity, his fear of death, and the ensuing discoveries he made about God, all of it led to this, so that I may walk before God in the light of the living.

You know what takes God's power perhaps more than anything else in our lives? Our constant devotion to him. You don't have that power in you.

God's power in our lives through our devotion to him. David said to walk before God, he was talking about pleasing him, to please him.

[51 : 55] always and in everything, to please him, to walk in the land, literally the land of the living. I believe that is for now.

I mean to walk in the land of the living. You know, God's people are the only ones who are really living in this world.

We can look, walk, as living. Jesus said, I've come to give you life and more abundantly our devotion to him to always walk so that we please him, that we might walk in the land of the living, to be living.

But it's not just for here. I think there's an illusion of the hereafter in the light of the living, to live in eternity, be removed one day from all possibility of fear.

fear. But until then, remember, God is faithful. He is mindful.

[53 : 11] He is powerful. You can trust him. who