

## **Trust in God Alone**

Devotional Reading: Jeremiah 17:5–11

Background Scripture: Psalm 62

Psalm 62

**1 Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.**

**2 He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.**

**3 How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? Ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.**

**4 They only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.**

**5 My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.**

**6 He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved.**

**7 In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.**

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

**9 Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.**

**10 Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.**

**11 God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.**

**12 Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.**

### **Key Text**

*My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.—Psalm 62:5*

## Worship in the Covenant Community

### Unit 2: Songs of the Old Testament

Lessons 6–9

#### Lesson Aims

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. List the many ways God is a source of strength in times of trouble.
2. Identify the barriers to peace found in Psalm 62.
3. Create a plan for intentional time to wait quietly on the Lord.

#### Lesson Outline

##### Introduction

- A. Song of Your Life
- B. Lesson Context

##### I. Calm Amidst Trouble (Psalm 62:1–4)

- A. Wait on God (vv. 1–2)  
*Quake Proof*
- B. Confronting Enemies (vv. 3–4)

##### II. Calm Discovered (Psalm 62:5–8)

- A. Refocusing on God (vv. 5–7)
- B. Admonishing the People (v. 8)

##### III. Calm Grounded in God (Psalm 62:9–12)

- A. Rejecting Insubstantial Help (vv. 9–10)  
*Weighing Air*
- B. Embracing Substance (vv. 11–12)

##### Conclusion

- A. Singing with David
- B. Prayer
- C. Thought to Remember

How to Say It  
Absalom *Ab*-suh-lum.

Ecclesiastes *Ik-leez-ee-as-teez*.

Israelites/z-ray-el-ites.

JeduthunJeh-*doo*-thun.

Selah (*Hebrew*)See-luh.

## Introduction

### A. Song of Your Life

If you were asked to describe your life as it is now with a song, what song would you choose? Consider what characteristics make it the right song for this time. Is it the tone (major or minor key) or the instruments (a violin that sounds forlorn)? Is it the lyrics, expressing contentment or love or betrayal? Is it a song you sing with others or all by yourself? If you've been honest with yourself, you might feel an emotional *click* when you name the song of your life at this time.

Songs have long been part of worship, in part because of their power to express our deepest hopes and fears while drawing us back to God. Perhaps the importance of songs in our relationship with God is best understood when we find ourselves in trouble, not knowing where to turn. At such times, songs like Psalm 62 affirm God's power and love even as they help us express what we need to tell God.

### B. Lesson Context

As prayers and songs, the Psalms give worshippers a voice. Sometimes it is the voice of lament (see Psalms 10; 13; 44; 77), and sometimes it is a voice of thanksgiving and praise (see Psalms 66; 107; 148). Lament prayers grieve suffering, and thanksgivings express gratitude. Psalm 62 is neither a lament nor a thanksgiving hymn, though it contains elements of both. Instead, this psalm can appropriately be called *a confidence psalm*. It expresses trust and hope in God in the middle of distress. Confidence psalms arise from an assured relationship with God. The psalmists are confident that God is their help and refuge. They trust in God's power and goodness, and they hope in God's faithfulness (compare Psalms 11; 23).

The superscript of Psalm 62 identifies Jeduthun as the leader of the choir (1 Chronicles 16:41, 42; 25:1–3; see Psalms 39; 77). He might have been someone like a songwriting partner to David (ruled about 1010–970 BC), who is identified as the writer of Psalm 62. Specific hardships are alluded to in the superscripts of David’s psalms (see commentary on 62:3–4, below).

The power of poetry, especially set to song, is to allow not only the writer or singer to express themselves—fears, pain, trust, love—but also to speak for an audience in attendance. Psalm 62 invited Israelites to join the song, and it still does for us today.

## **I. Calm Amidst Trouble (Psalm 62:1–4)**

### **A. Wait on God (vv. 1–2)**

#### **1. Truly my soul waiteth upon God. From him cometh my salvation.**

*Truly* translates a key word in this psalm (translated “only” in Psalm 62:2, 4–6 and “surely” in 62:9). Its repetition throughout the psalm emphasizes the truth of each statement, lending a heightened sense of the sincerity for the psalmist.

*My soul* identifies the seat of a person’s commitments and loyalties. It is the “I” of personhood. *Waiteth* translates a rare Hebrew word in the Bible, occurring only four times (Psalms 22:2; 39:2; 62:1; 65:1). This waiting is restful, sometimes even silent. David was not an autonomous self but a dependent one. David entrusted himself to *God* because *salvation* comes from God, though we do not yet know from what David required rescuing (see 62:3, below). In this instance, salvation should not be thought of as a distant spiritual reality but as a present, physical rescue (examples: Exodus 14:13; 1 Samuel 14:45; Psalm 35:1–3).

Like David, we are wise when we entrust ourselves to the Lord and do not trust ourselves (Proverbs 3:5–6). Completely trusting God is related to the covenant (see Psalm 62:11b–12a, below). If David trusted God completely based on covenants in Israel, how much more should we, given that we have received what Israel hoped for (Hebrews 11)?

#### **What Do You Think?**

How would you describe the experience of finding rest for your soul in God?

#### **Digging Deeper**

What habits make resting in God possible regardless of your

circumstances?

**2. He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.**

Repeating the word *salvation* is another way David emphasized his confidence that he would find what he needed from the Lord (see Psalm 62:1, above). Only God, the *rock*, can serve as the source of stability and rest. When God was David's *defence*, he could confidently and boldly profess that he could never *be greatly moved*—and so can we. Grounded in God's gracious salvation and protected by God's power, we confess that nothing will shake us (see also Psalms 30:6; 46:5; 55:22; 66:9; 112:6; 121:3). Our feet will not slip or give way. The soul committed to God alone is stabilized by God's saving work and protective care.

### **Quake Proof**

Building earthquake-resistant structures in California isn't just wise; it's the law. The engineering solutions required to mitigate the effects of a violent earthquake can be quite impressive. A simple but effective method is to use cross beams to reinforce the strength of a structure. Another method is to have pistons within the structure that absorb the energy of the shock waves. Flexible foundations will sway with the vibrations; a pendulum method utilizes a large counterweight attached to the building to absorb some shock. Using materials that will bend without breaking or crumbling is also key.

Given a big enough earthquake, though, even well-designed buildings will fall. The mitigation techniques used are primarily meant to preserve human life; the rebuilding process of physical structures after a quake can still be vast. But there is no earthquake of life that is so large that God cannot help you stand. Call on your rock and your salvation, and He will see you through.

—C. S.

### **B. Confronting Enemies (vv. 3–4)**

**3. How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? Ye shall be slain all of you. As a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.**

This verse and the next feature several contrasts between what has come before to what will come after. *Ye shall be slain* and the images of an unstable *wall* and *fence* contrast the transient nature of David and his enemies with the

unchanging, faithful God, who is David's "rock" and "defence" (Psalm 62:2, above). The contrast highlights God's power versus the ultimate powerlessness of any human as well as God's integrity in His dealings with David against the unreliability of his enemies. We do not know the specific nature of the *mischief* David's opponents imagined, but we know that David's life was full of situations that might fit the bill (see 62:4, below).

**4. They only consult to cast him down from his excellency. They delight in lies. They bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.**

The Hebrew adverb translated *only* appeared in Psalm 62:1–2 (see commentary above). In the opening of the psalm, God is the only ground of assurance. But David's opponents lacked reverence for God, as evidenced by their total disregard for David, God's chosen king (1 Samuel 16:7–12; 2 Samuel 7:8–9; contrast 1 Samuel 24:5–7).

Speaking of himself in the third person, David suggested these opponents conspired *to cast him down from his excellency*, referring either to his position in Saul's court or to the throne itself. Some examples come from before David became king while he was part of King Saul's court or exiled from it (1 Samuel 18:10–11; 23:7–29; etc.; compare Psalms 57; 63; 142). Another possibility occurs decades later when King David's own son Absalom revolted against his father and tried to depose him (2 Samuel 15:13–14; compare Psalm 3). These and other efforts revealed David's enemies to be liars and hypocrites, willing to *bless with their mouth* while they *curse inwardly* (compare Matthew 23). They sought to undermine God's chosen and unjustly attacked David.

No one is sure what *selah* means. Since the book of Psalms was used in Israel's corporate worship and the psalms were frequently set to music (see Lesson Context, above), we can postulate that *selah* is a musical note, perhaps for a silent pause. This guess works well if the song leader wanted to invite the congregation to consider their own concerns as they prayed and sang the psalmist's words.

**What Do You Think?**

How do you handle opposition from people who speak well but have evil intent?

**Digging Deeper**

What verses inform your answer?

## II. Calm Discovered (Psalm 62:5–8)

### A. Refocusing on God (vv. 5–7)

**5–6. My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation. He is my defence; I shall not be moved.**

These two verses form a sort of refrain, largely repeating what was expressed in Psalm 62:1–2 (above). *Wait* is a form of “waiteth” that appeared in 62:1. In Psalm 131:2, the same word is used, describing a weaned child with his mother. There as here, the image is of security, peace, and silence.

**7. In God is my salvation and my glory. The rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.**

This verse expands what is said in Psalm 62:1–2 and 62:5–6, above. Here as there, God is the psalmist’s *salvation*, *rock*, and *refuge*. The only new language here is of God as the psalmist’s *glory*. The word can also be translated “honour” (Psalms 26:8; 66:2; etc.). The first example of God’s giving people glory is found at creation (Genesis 1:26–27; Psalm 8:5). We also think of Jesus’ honoring people by becoming fully human in order to minister among us and die for our sins (Philippians 2:6–11).

#### **What Do You Think?**

Why was David able to express this kind of confidence in the Lord before Jesus’ atoning sacrifice?

#### **Digging Deeper**

How can Old Testament stories of God’s faithfulness bolster your own faith in Christ?

### B. Admonishing the People (v. 8)

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

Imagine a temple worship service where a singer offers a testimony and expresses his or her hope in God’s loving care. Then the singer turns to the congregation and invites them to share in this testimony. The singer calls the people of God to *trust* God, just as the singer does. God is not only the singer’s refuge but is a *refuge for us*. The people of God share the same story. They

rehearse the story of God's powerful deliverance through the exodus and His loving election of Israel as the people of His Old Testament covenant.

Because we trust in God's deliverance, we embrace Him as our refuge. As such, the singer also invites us to *pour out* our hearts to God. Our restful waiting does not require silence (see Psalm 62:1, above), though it can imply it (examples: 131:2; Lamentations 3:28; etc.). Rather, as we rest in God's care, we tell God the truth of our hearts.

### **What Do You Think?**

Would it be accurate to say that you pour out your heart to God?

Why or why not?

### **Digging Deeper**

What is the most difficult thing in your life for you to talk to God about? What would happen if you prayed deeply about that thing today?

## **III. Calm Grounded in God (Psalm 62:9–12)**

### **A. Rejecting Insubstantial Help (vv. 9–10)**

**9. Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie. To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.**

A stark contrast is drawn between God and *men*, whether of *low* or *high degree*. These contrasts are meant to be understood together, indicating all people (compare Psalm 49:2). When compared to God, each person from least to greatest is *vanity* and *a lie*. The concept of vanity is familiar from the book of Ecclesiastes, which frequently uses this same Hebrew word to assert the meaninglessness observed in human life (examples: Ecclesiastes 1:2, 14; 2:11; 3:19). The word describes a mist that appears for a moment and then dissipates.

In this way, anyone can be (metaphorically) weighed (*laid in the balance*) and found to be *lighter than vanity*. For ancient people, balance scales were vital to commerce. Coinage wouldn't be invented until sometime in the 600s BC, so transactions in David's day (about 400 years earlier) and for centuries following his reign were done by weight (examples: Genesis 23:16; 1 Kings 7:47). An unbalanced or loaded scale could cheat people out of precious resources (example: Amos 8:5). The weight of goods was truly important. When weighed



against God on a balance scale, there is no substance to us (compare Isaiah 40:15). And this is the root of our untrustworthiness; this is what allows us to sin in the first place. We can try with all our might, but we lack the power to do most of the good we would like. And we ultimately cannot trust ourselves or others who hold no power for deliverance.

### **Weighing Air**

When I was a boy, my classmates and I enjoyed weighing objects on our science lab's balance scale. I found great satisfaction in the tactile process of adding or subtracting weight until the scales balanced. I especially appreciated the brass weights that were used to give accurate results. Sadly for my childhood self, this method of measuring weight has largely fallen by the wayside in favor of spring or electronic scales.

People, regardless of their station, weigh as nothing on the scale of trustworthiness. We are so light that if the right scale existed, we might all float away instead of weighing even one ounce as being worthy of trust. When faced with the question of where to place your trust, will it be your fellow weightless creatures or the creator God?

—C. S.

### **10. Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery. If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.**

For the powerful, their success at *oppression* can feel like safety. The illusion of having control over not only one's own life but also the lives of others creates a false sense of self-determination and influence over the world. In truth, oppressors need fear God's wrath and judgment for their sins—a lesson Israel (and Judah) would learn long after David's reign ended (example: Amos 2:4–16).

In the Hebrew practice of poetic parallelism, *robbery* stands parallel to the oppression of the previous line in encompassing any number of financial or material crimes. It is an effective strategy for maintaining one's power. But even *riches* obtained without extortion or other wickedness are not to be trusted (compare 1 Timothy 6:10, 17–19).

In short, no human resource can serve as a refuge from trouble. Rather than relying on creatures, David invites us to "trust in [God] at all times" (Psalm 62:8, above).

### What Do You Think?

How do you prevent prudent financial decisions from becoming idolatrous trusting in your wealth (savings, retirement funds, etc.)?

### Digging Deeper

What biblical advice would you offer to younger adults who are learning wisdom in their financial decisions?

## B. Embracing Substance (vv. 11–12)

### 11a. God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this.

These two phrases poetically emphasize the efficacy of God's speaking. We might think of creation, when *God* had only to say a word, and what He said was created (Genesis 1). For David to hear God's speech *twice* might mean He repeated a particular message, or it could simply emphasize that David took what he heard to heart. The latter is certainly in view, based on the confidence David has expressed in the Lord.

### 11b–12a. That power belongeth unto God. Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy.

God's *power* stands in contrast to the illusion of power that people might have (see Psalm 62:9, above). It has been alluded to several times already (see 62:1–2, 6–8, above), but here power is called out. For many, God's power, in combination with His wrath, is the primary way of understanding Him as revealed in the Old Testament (examples: Genesis 19; Deuteronomy 5:9; 2 Kings 17:16–23; Jeremiah 20:4–5; Jonah 3:1–4).

But a closer reading suggests that God's power cannot be understood without also considering His *mercy*. The Hebrew word translated "mercy" is frequently used in the context of God's covenant love and loyalty toward Israel (examples: Exodus 20:4–6; Deuteronomy 7:9–12). His mercy both initiated and sustained the covenant.

One example of God's power and mercy at work for Israel was the story of the exodus. Out of His covenant loyalty, God promised to bring Israel out of Egypt (Genesis 46:3–4), and He then began that work (Exodus 2:24). Bringing the Israelites out from their slavery as conquerors and providing for them in the desert—even in the face of multiple rebellions—were actions motivated by love and accomplished with power (15:13). Even the examples of God's wrath reveal His desire for mercy (see Genesis 18:20–33; Jeremiah 23:3; Jonah 3:10–4:2).

Perhaps most striking is, even after pronouncing judgment for three or four generations, God says He shows love and mercy to thousands (Deuteronomy 5:10). This is a difference of degree; God limits His wrath and lets His love and mercy overflow.

We do not know whether David wrote this psalm before or after receiving God's promise of a house for David's family (2 Samuel 7). God was powerful to keep that promise centuries later, and through it, we experience God's love in Christ (Matthew 1:1). Unsurprisingly, then, many called on Jesus to have mercy on them throughout His ministry (examples: 9:27; 15:22; 20:30).

**12b. For thou renderest to every man according to his work.**

Paul alluded to this phrase in Romans 2:6 (compare Proverbs 24:12) and expressed a similar sentiment in 2 Timothy 4:14. Some students propose that neither David nor Paul seems to have had the Last Judgment in mind when making this assertion. Instead, God's conduct is appropriately contrasted with human conduct. Whereas we might act with a lack of integrity or with only selfish ends in mind, God acts out of His power and mercy and intends to set the world to rights.

## **Conclusion**

### **A. Singing with David**

Just as a song on the radio can feel like it was written for *you* at this *exact moment* in your life and expresses what you need to say, so too can psalms. Psalm 62 invites us to sing along with David and join him in his expression of confidence in God alone. Without identifying a specific situation in David's life, the psalm becomes that much more accessible for any situation we might relate to the feelings expressed within. Whatever troubled David, we have our own troubles. David models for us how to face our own struggles even though our troubles are different from his. We surrender every circumstance to God because we not only know God's strength and love, but we also know He will deal with evil and hold human beings accountable for their actions. Those who trust in God have nothing to fear; we fear neither God's judgment nor the troubles that have swamped us. The God of power and mercy will do what is just and right.

Without any further details, we can say with confidence only that David found himself in a turbulent situation. In the midst of it, the king still expressed supreme confidence in God. Sometimes joining David in song will mean singing praise to

God, alone or with fellow believers. But other practices also nurture confidence in God, especially when misplaced faith in people falls apart. One example of pouring our hearts out to God (Psalm 62:8, above) could be reading the psalm as our own prayer. While doing so, we reflect on what we need from God, whether that is a change of circumstance or to strength to endure.

We could also read the psalm as a way to listen for God (Psalm 62:11, above). Listening for Him in all of Scriptures allows us to learn who He is, grasp what He desires for and from us, and build the relationship that He desires and we so desperately need. We must constantly and consistently open ourselves to the Word of God through listening to the reading of Scripture in community, studying Scripture in family and private moments, and memorizing Scripture. We devote time to mulling over the language of Scripture in order to listen to the voice of the Spirit so that we might come to know God and become like God in our conduct.

In these ways and more, we must recenter ourselves on God to be reminded of His power and mercy. Only then will our confidence be found in God alone, and only then will we, too, have supreme confidence in who God is and what He is willing to accomplish because of His great love.

### **B. Prayer**

Our Father, You know we are often surrounded by troubles. Help us trust You so that peace and love might reign in our hearts by Your power and because of Your mercy. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

### **C. Thought to Remember**

We trust God because He is willing *and* able to save us.