

# In A Cave

Be turning in your Bibles to Psalms 57 for our study. This is one of the psalms of David that was written in the midst of very difficult and trying circumstances. David wrote psalm 57 when he was hiding in a cave. Notice verse 1 introduces the psalm being ***when he fled from Saul in the cave.*** From this we conclude that it was written in the early period of David's life. Evidently it was during the time when David was on the run from Saul who was out trying to chase David down like a dog and kill him. David left the populated area and fled to the southern part of the land where he hid in the cave of Adullam located near the Dead Sea.

I've been told there are some massive caves in this area. Some have large rooms that can hold thousands of people with passage ways that lead in many different directions. It's very easy to hide in such a cave. So during this dangerous period of David's life, the cave was his refuge. It was during this period of his life that David said, "***there is but a step between me and death.***" (1 Sam. 20:3)

Figuratively speaking, we've all been in a cave. I'm talking about experiencing those difficult moments of life. You know a cave is not always a pleasant place to spend your time. Many are wet, dark and cold. They can be dangerous and we don't always enjoy being in a cave, but life often puts us there. Maybe it's a time of stress and we think we have had just about all we can handle and we don't think we can take any more. Or maybe we are in a cave because of family problems. Perhaps our children aren't doing as they should or there is trouble between husband and wife or maybe there is failing health. Maybe there is a problem between a trusting friend we think has let us down. Any number of situations could be stated, but the point is that often we find ourselves during the course of life backed into a cave trying to work through those difficult experiences of life.

Here we have David in a cave both figuratively and literally and while there, he shares his thoughts with us. The amazing thing is that while in this cave, David's mind is literally filled with Godly thoughts. In these 11 verses, either by name or pronoun, David refers to God 21 different times. We don't enjoy the difficult things of life and it's not pleasant to be in a cave but during those unpleasant experiences we go through, we learn more about God than any other time. That seems to be true with David.

If you were to outline this psalm, you might consider the word "*exhalted.*" It occurs on two occasions and it really divides the psalm into two distinct parts. It's found the first time in v 5. ***Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth.*** Then it's repeated again in v 11. So around this verse the psalm is divided.

**Verses 1-6 make up the first of those divisions.** These verses are a prayer that David offers to God in which he describes the calamities he faced. Look and v1 ***Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me:*** Notice the repetition, twice he asks for God's mercy. He is crying out to God in desperation. His life is in danger and his safety is in jeopardy. So he is appealing to God to come to his aid and to protect him from his enemy. David recognized where his real safety was. He knew his real safety was not in the cave although he was hiding in the cave to conceal his presence from his Saul, but David realized his real refuge was not a place but rather a person. So David continues in that verse ***for my soul trusteth*** (taketh refuge) ***in thee yea,....*** David appealed to God for help in time of difficulty.

Where do you turn when calamities come into your life? Some people run to the doctor and there are times it's good to go the doctor. Many times they can diagnose a problem and treat us with medication and get us back

on our feet. Some people run to a lawyer and there are certain situations where we need the advice and counsel of a lawyer. Others turn to a banker or a preacher. In spite of the fact that there are times when all these people can help us, let us not forget that the ultimate source of help is none other than God himself. There will come a time when the banker, counselor, doctor or preacher can't help you in your difficulty and God is the only one who can come to you aid. David understood that and so he put his trust in God.

Notice the beautiful description David uses toward the end of v 1. ***In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge.*** Some think he is referring to the mercy seat located in the tabernacle. The mercy seat was overlaid with gold and covered the Ark of the Covenant. On each end of the mercy seat were cherubim's and they were facing one another and their wings were spread out such that they literally covered the mercy seat. Others think these words refer to the wings of the cherubim's. As beautiful as that description is, David isn't talking about taking refuge under the wings of the Cherubim's. He says in the shadow of THY wings, so we understand that he is talking about the wings of God. David is describing the care and protection being available by God. It's the idea of protection like a hen hides her chicks under her wing. Little chicks can run to a mother hen in time of danger and they can find protection under her wings. Isn't that a beautiful way to describe the protection of God and isn't it a comfort to know that there is no problem too difficult for God to handle.

Verse 2 David appeals to God to "hear me." ***{2} I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me.*** He describes God as "God most high." He is acknowledging God as the God of creation and all powerful. This expression was used way back over in Gen 14 by Melkesidic where he told Abraham that "the most high God will bless him." God is THE MOST HIGH God. This is important to remember because it means that God is higher than your problems. Some times we use the expression, "he's really on top of things" and by that we mean he has things under control. That's especially true about God because there is no problem too difficult for him to handle or perform. The expression "performeth" means "to accomplish" or "bring to completion" something. So David is crying out to a God who will stick with you through thick and thin.

You know, God does things all the way. He doesn't do things just half way. I have projects all around the farm that are almost finished, but not quite. God's not that way. He completes what he starts. The creation is described as "good" and the tabernacle as "perfect." In ***(2 Pet 1:3) According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness,*** You see, God does things all the way and He will work in you to "perfect" you life. (Listen to what Paul said in ***(Phil 1:6) Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*** When we obeyed the gospel, the Lord "began a work in us" and he will see it through or perform it until the day of Christ. God will not forsake us. I call you attention again to ***(Heb 13:5): for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.***

***{3} He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.*** David acknowledges that God will help him even though there are those that want to "swallow me up." Literally that means they want to "eat me up." What if I announced that tonight after services we are going to select someone and roast them over a big BBQ pit? We'll take a volunteer and cut them up into small pieces, cook him and then everybody else would have a feast. That's absurd you say. That's cannibalism and we don't do that; and you are right. But you know there are people who with their tongues do in essence the same thing. The just roast others over the fires of hate and they take the reputation, character & good name of another and chew them up and spit them out. It is a different form of cannibalism but it is cannibalism none the less. David says God can save you from such people.

Specifically, David was talking about Saul and his crowd who were out to destroy David and his character. They said things trying to discredit David and to tear him down in the eyes of the people. Has that ever happened to you? If so, how did you react when someone treats you like that? Well, let's look at what David did.

David could have retaliated and settle the score. He had opportunity to do that. There was another time in 1 Samuel 24 when David and his men were hiding in one of the caves and Saul came inside and went to sleep, not knowing that David and his men were hiding back in the shadows. After Saul was asleep, David's men urged David to end it all right there and to kill Saul in his sleep. But David refused and said he was not going to lay a finger on the Lord's anointed. David would not retaliate. David would not seek revenge. Instead, David appealed to God for help.

He says in **{6} They have prepared a net for my steps;** And in essence he is saying God I need your help to deliver me from that net and the pit they have dug for me. David turned it over to the Lord. Let me suggest that be our response when people want to criticize and swallow us up. God took care of David's enemies and he will do the same for us but on his schedule. **Vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord (Rom 12:19).** So in these 6 verses we see David taking the calamities of life to God because God can help us deal with our problems.

In verses 7 and following, David moves on to the reality that thrills us. There is a noticeable change in tone as you move into these verses. Here David moves from prayer into praise. In these verses, (David mentions two great spiritual realities that helped him climb out of that pit of despair and they are: 1) steadfastness and 2) sharing. The same truths will help us today.

Notice **{7} My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.** When David says my heart is fixed, he doesn't mean that it was damaged and had been repaired. Instead he meant, "my heart is steadfast." David had appealed for mercy and God was faithful to David so in essence David is now saying, "God, I am going to be faithful to you. You can count on me. My heart is fixed." David's mind was made up.

Can you truthfully say that? Is your heart made up to be faithful to the Lord? The song we sometimes sing "*I Have Decided To Follow Jesus*" says, "*No turning back, no turning back.*" That ought to be the attitude of a Christian. Have you really and truly made up your mind to do what is right? If not, make that decision before today. Because David's heart was fixed, he goes on to say that ***I will sing and give praise. {8} Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.*** This expression depicts the idea that David will awake early in the morning, and when he does, he will be singing God's praise. Let me suggest we get into the practice of praying to God as soon as we awake each morning and thank him for the nights rest and the day before us.

Remember, David was not writing from some luxury room in a palace somewhere. Things were not exactly going David's way. He was in a time of terrible difficulty. Yet, in spite of that, David sang God's praises; what a marvelous attitude for us to copy. For every problem we face, there are hundreds of blessings we enjoy.

The second principle is found in v 9. There David says he is going to tell others about the Lord so they can sing praise to him also. ***{9} I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations. {10} For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.*** David wants other people to know about the great God he worships. He was not ashamed to praise the Lord in front of others.

David's problems brought him closer to the Lord instead of pushing him farther away. When problems come, people generally react in one of two ways. The either draw close to God or else they blame God and alienate

themselves from God. We shouldn't let problems interfere with our relationship to God. When that non-Christian sees our relationship to the Lord remains firm even during troubled times, they begin to consider that maybe there is something to this idea of Christianity. They too become more spiritual minded when they see in your life that Jesus is your Lord not only in the sunshine but also when the storm clouds gather.

So David says in closing **{11} Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.** That was the theme of David whether in good times or bad, let God be exalted.

Have you exalted God? Invitation