

# Psalm 62

PSALM 62:1-12

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It is a great blessing to be able to be with you this morning! I hope all of us have the elements for the Lord's Supper, either from home or from the table in the entryway, as John/Aaron will be leading us in the prayers for the Supper right after our study this morning, and then, after the Lord's Supper, Caleb/Josh will be leading us in three songs [and then I hope you can stick around for Bible class at 10 and come back for the cookout at noon today]. I am looking forward to it!

As we begin today, I want to make sure we at least briefly explain God's plan of salvation. We put this on the wall each week (or on the screen, for those of you joining us online), so that we have some of the key passages at least referenced here in a way we can check these out for ourselves. You can replay it later online or you can perhaps take out your phone and take a picture of it right now. But we know that we have sinned. We were not born this way, but all of us get to a point in life where we choose to do wrong. This separates us from God, but thankfully, God has provided a way back. God sent his only Son, Jesus, as a sacrifice for our sins. He died, he was buried, and he was raised up on the third day. In response, we believe this good news, and we obey it. We turn away from sin, we confess our faith in Jesus as being the Christ, the Son of God, and then we allow ourselves to be buried with him in baptism, for the forgiveness of sins. At this point, we are added by God to his kingdom, the church, and the Christian life begins. If you are interested in exploring this further, please get in touch.

As most of you can see on the wall up here, we have an example. This one comes to us from the Roeser congregation in Phoenix, Arizona. Just a few days ago, they posted online and said, "Let's welcome our new Sister to the body of Christ! Sister Sydney obeyed the Gospel today at the Roeser Church of Christ." We are thankful for Sydney's obedience to the gospel this week.

And then we are also sharing several pictures (once again) from the Twinville congregation in the Philippines. You might remember that we have shared some pictures from this congregation before. Several days ago, they posted online and said, "There is POWER in the BLOOD! Albert Cruz learned that baptism will forgive his sins and that GOD will add him to His Kingdom, so he obeyed Jesus in BAPTISM this morning; he is rejoicing and praising God. Let us welcome our new brother in His Kingdom." And I love the progression of the pictures here. This is something that's been repeated perhaps millions of times over the past 2000 years – two men standing together, one with an open Bible in his hand; then, an immersion in water (this time, in a barrel); and the immersion is then followed by a prayer of thanksgiving. We rejoice with Albert and his new Christian family over

in the Philippines today. And we share all of this by way of encouragement: What Albert and Sydney have done this week, you can do this morning. If you have any questions at all, if you would like to study together, please pull me aside after worship today or give me a call or send a text or email as soon as possible. Our contact information is on the website and in the bulletin.

And then, before we get to our study today, I'd also like to share some good news from the Bible correspondence course program. Patsy gave me two notes this week. The first one comes to us from Bryan, who seems to be an inmate at a state prison, perhaps in Pennsylvania. Bryan says, "Dear sir or Madam at Four Lakes Church of Christ: Thank you for the wonderful Bible studies. You are such a blessing to me and others. May you have a great day! In God we trust always. Bryan."

And then we also have a note that comes to us from Jocelyn. Jocelyn says, "I am truly grateful for these Bible studies. I am still learning God's ways and learning how to live his way. I am going through a very hard and tough time in my life right now. I am asking if you all can just pray for me. I really need it right now. I am repenting the best I can, and I really need the Lord's forgiveness. I need him to believe in me as I believe in him. I have done a lot wrong in life but all I want to do is make things better and live right by the Lord. Thank you for taking your time to read this and sending me weekly Bible studies. God bless you all. Sincerely, Jocelyn." So, let's be praying for Bryan and for Jocelyn this week, and let's also pray for the hundreds of others who are taking these courses through our congregation. And if you would like to enroll and take these yourself, send us your information, and we will send you the first two lessons, you study those and return them, we grade them and return them to you with the next two lessons, and so on, until all of the lessons are completed, and you receive a certificate of completion.

This morning, I would invite you to turn with me to Psalm 62. I should tell you that the picture on the wall up here is not directly related to our study today. I just need to get that out of the way here at the beginning. We are heading toward learning that God is our rock. So, I went looking through my phone for a picture of a rock, I saw the proverbial squirrel, and landed on a picture of Lake Crescent, several miles west of Port Angeles, Washington. I took this last October, on a visit to see my sister out there. I was coming back to her place after a day of hiking, it was raining (as it always does out there), the clouds broke, I pulled over to the side of the road, and there was a rainbow! And we are simply using this as our background today.

But, by now, I hope you have made it to Psalm 62 in your own copy of the Bible! Psalm 62 is obviously found in the book of Psalms. It is a Psalm, or a song. The book of Psalms is basically a songbook. Just as we use *Praise for the Lord* or the *Paperless Hymnal*, the ancient Israelites used the book of Psalms. Many of the oldest psalms were written by King David (this one is), and those by David would date back to nearly a thousand years before Christ. We have at least one written by Moses, several hundred years before that. But others were written by Solomon and a number of others, and many are anonymous. But the psalms are intended to be sung during worship. Many are appropriate to be prayed. We can sometimes pray the psalms. The psalms are honest, sometimes even raw, we might say. Some are quite emotional. Some are angry.

As we move toward Psalm 62, I should also point out that the psalms are poetry. And this can be a challenge. Some of us have a hard time appreciating poetry. But the special challenge is that the psalms are poetry in another language! We think poetry in English is a challenge. But the translation from ancient Hebrew brings a special challenge. We have figures of speech to deal with. We almost completely lose any concept of rhyme or rhythm. We have word pictures from another culture. The psalms, then, can be a challenge.

And I will admit: Psalm 62 has been a special challenge. And part of the reason is the structure of this psalm. For a while, I couldn't see any structure. But as I studied, as I took notes, I learned that this psalm is known as being CHAISTIC. A CHIASM is a literary device where the author structures a piece of writing almost like a mirror image. The word goes back to a Greek letter that looks like an "X." We look at the letter "X," and it's the same on both sides. It's almost as if one half of the letter is the mirror image of the other. Some seem to have found this structure in the account of the Great Flood in Genesis 6-9. Others have seen it in the book of Daniel. Others have seen it here.

On the wall, I've separated the sections by paragraph, and when I add labels, identifying the focus of each little section, you'll notice that Psalm 62 is about GOD, then MAN, then it peaks with GOD in the larger section with four verses in the middle (set off with the two **"SELAHS"**, then it goes back to MAN, and then ends with GOD – so, GOD, MAN, **GOD**, MAN, GOD – a CHIASM. It begins and ends with God, and has a larger section about God right there in the middle. I included some information about CHIASMS in the email that went out with the bulletin last night.

There's another interesting challenge to studying the psalms: As music, some of them have what seem to be some kind of musical notations or instructions built into the text. We see it in Psalm 62 with the word **"SELAH."** We've studied the psalms before, so most of us know that the word SELAH is probably not intended to be spoken or sung, but it is to be obeyed, just as we might "obey" a "rest" in a piece of music. We don't say "rest," as we sing, but we actually "rest," we pause. And that seems to be what's going on with the word **"SELAH."** It perhaps refers to a dramatic crescendo, followed by a pause, as if to let the last thought sink in a bit. And I point that out, because as we read Psalm 62 in just a moment, let's take the **"SELAH"** as a pause. We're not leaving out a word from the Bible, but we will actually be doing what that word is telling us to do, by pausing for just a moment.

And this brings us to the text itself. Psalm 62 is a song about God, and specifically, it's a song about the rest we find with God, especially in times of chaos and despair. As I said, this psalm was written by King David. We don't know the exact circumstances (as we do with some of the psalms, based on the ancient heading), but it's obvious King David is facing some kind of challenge to his leadership. In the face of this, though, King David turns to God alone. And this is the last detail I hope we can keep an eye out for as we read: David uses the word **"only"** four times with reference to God in this short psalm, and each of those times (in Hebrew), as I understand it, the **"only"** actually comes at the beginning of the sentence. And it seems to be done this way for emphasis, to emphasize that his faith is in God **"only."** As opposed to anything or anyone else he could ever possibly trust, David's trust is in God alone. And here's the ongoing struggle with translating poetry: Very few of our English translations start these four sentences with **"only."** Some do better than others. I looked at the interlinear on this chapter (the Hebrew text with the English underneath it), and the **"only"** really stands out at the beginning of these four verses (**"only, only, only, only"**), but the word order makes no sense at all in English. We don't talk that way. Verse 1, for example, says, **"Only for God silently waits my soul."** In English, that's just awkward. If I had written that in middle school, my English teacher would have put a big "AWK" out in the margin. It's awkward. But I want us to keep an eye out for the **"onlys"** in this chapter.

With all of this as background, let's look at all twelve verses of Psalm 62, a Psalm of David,

<sup>1</sup> ***My soul waits in silence for God only;  
From Him is my salvation.***

<sup>2</sup> ***He only is my rock and my salvation,***

***My stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken.***

- 3 How long will you assail a man,  
That you may murder him, all of you,  
Like a leaning wall, like a tottering fence?***
- 4 They have counseled only to thrust him down from his high position;  
They delight in falsehood;  
They bless with their mouth,  
But inwardly they curse. Selah.***
- 5 My soul, wait in silence for God only,  
For my hope is from Him.***
- 6 He only is my rock and my salvation,  
My stronghold; I shall not be shaken.***
- 7 On God my salvation and my glory rest;  
The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God.***
- 8 Trust in Him at all times, O people;  
Pour out your heart before Him;  
God is a refuge for us. Selah.***
- 9 Men of low degree are only vanity and men of rank are a lie;  
In the balances they go up;  
They are together lighter than breath.***
- 10 Do not trust in oppression  
And do not vainly hope in robbery;  
If riches increase, do not set your heart upon them.***
- 11 Once God has spoken;  
Twice I have heard this:  
That power belongs to God;***
- 12 And lovingkindness is Yours, O Lord,  
For You recompense a man according to his work.***

As we learn from what David writes here, I'd like to separate the verses about ***"man"*** from the verses about ***"God."*** I want to pull these apart. And I think it'll make sense when you see it. So, instead of going from God to man to God to man and back to God (as it is arranged poetically here), I'd like to pull these apart. This will be our lesson today – the ***"man"*** verses, and then the ***"God"*** verses.

- I. **And I want us to start with the "man" part of this Psalm: As we pull out verses 3-4 and verses 9-10, we find that when it comes to finding peace and security, PEOPLE WILL OFTEN DISAPPOINT, people will let us down.**

And remember: This is coming from King David. We know from the books of Samuel and Kings and Chronicles that David was almost constantly harassed. We have David on the run from Saul for a number of years at the beginning. And then we have one challenge after another for the rest of his life, including a time when David was run out of the capital city by his own son, Absalom. He was betrayed by a number of close friends.

And that's what we see here, in verse 3, ***"How long will you assail a man, that you may murder him, all of you, like a leaning wall, like a tottering fence?"*** Normally, a wall and a fence would provide protection, but here, the wall and the fence are about to topple. As I see it, then, these people see David, and they see weakness. And David himself sees himself as being pretty vulnerable here. ***"Like a leaning wall, like a tottering fence,"*** King David perhaps feels as if he is barely hanging on. And his enemies can sense this. The king is about to topple, and all we need to do is give him just a little push.

It's not a physical push, though. Instead, David's enemies seem to be working through gossip and rumor. In verse 4, ***"They have counseled only to thrust him down from his high position; they delight in falsehood; they bless with their mouth, but inwardly they curse."*** These people are lying about the king, lying in a way to weaken David's position, lying in a way to ***"thrust him down from his high position."***

Now, I personally have never been chased down by a king, and I don't know whether any of you have nearly lost your kingdom to your own son, but most of us have faced some challenges in this life. Perhaps we've been betrayed by somebody. We look for support, but this person we trust gossips about us. Or maybe we've had some sleepless nights over some choices our children are making. Maybe we're overwhelmed facing a serious health challenge. In all of these scenarios, the people we turn to for help will often find new and unique ways to let us down! We expect support from our friends and even our Christian family, but the people we rely on for support will often let us down. People will disappoint!

This warning returns down in verse 9, where David realizes that, ***"Men of low degree are only vanity and men of rank are a lie; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than breath."*** In other words, when it comes to support you can really count on, those who are poor might be WILLING, but they aren't really ABLE to help (they are ***"vanity,"*** they are ***"nothing"***), and those who are rich may be ABLE, but they are perhaps not WILLING to help (they are a ***"lie,"*** it's all a show, they are really no more helpful than the poor). And so, in terms of support during difficult times, your friends in low places and your friends in high places are equally worthless, they all amount to nothing, and together they are ***"lighter than breath."***

And then, David also makes an observation concerning wealth itself. In verse 10, whether we get our wealth through oppression or robbery, riches (like our friends) will also let us down. But then he speaks to wealth in general, and his conclusion is, ***"If riches increase, do not set your heart on them."*** And he says this, because (like our friends) wealth will also disappoint.

And again, most of us have seen this. We have experienced this. Like David, most of us have also been disappointed by our friends, even by our own Christian family. We've been let down by wealth. We've been let down by our rich friends and also by our poor friends. We agree with David that people will often disappoint. And this is the ***"man"*** part of this study. People will let us down.

II. **As we go back to the psalm itself, we now pull out the "God" verses in this chiasmic arrangement (we pull out verses 1-2, verses 5-8, and verses 11-12), and come to David's conclusion that GOD IS OUR ROCK.**

We see the ***"rock"*** picture at least twice in this passage (in verse 2 and in verse 6), but the concept is repeated several times as David also describes God as his ***"salvation"*** (in verses 1 and 2 and 6), as his ***"stronghold"*** (in verses 2 and 6), as his ***"strength"*** (in verse 7), and as a ***"refuge"*** (in verses 7 and 8). So, I'm just summarizing all

of this with the idea that God is David's **"rock."** And it's a contrast: People will let us down, but God is our rock! God is our shelter, a refuge in the storm. Most of us have had to take refuge at one time or another, perhaps from a tornado, or maybe from something else. In this building, if there's a tornado, I'm heading down to Classroom #1, the room under the entryway and the back room. It's a room with concrete on all six sides. That's the place to go if we are here. Some of you might remember me telling about the time maybe 15 years ago when I was riding my bike south on Gilbert Road toward our house on the far southwest side of Madison. A storm came up suddenly, lightning started crashing all around, the rain started pouring down, and right as I crossed Raymond Road on Gilbert, all of a sudden all of the hair on my arms stood up, my heart seemed to skip a beat or two, and I was pretty sure I was about to get struck by lightning. I rode as fast as I could and rode my bike pretty much right in to Huegel Elementary School on Prairie Road, under the water tower. I left my bike in the entryway and ran inside. Looking back on it, I hope I didn't cause a panic, but to me it was much scarier outside at that moment. That school became my **"rock,"** my **"shelter,"** my **"refuge,"** in that storm. And that's the way David sees God in this passage. All of the people in his life are letting him down, but God is his **"rock."** God is his **"refuge."** Sometimes we sing, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee." That is what David is doing here. He's recognizing God as his **"refuge."**

Notice the possessive pronouns in these **"God"** verses. David says that **"MY soul waits in silence for God only; from Him is MY salvation,"** he is **"MY rock and MY salvation, MY stronghold,"** and so on. This is personal. Others have let him down, but God is always there for King David. God is HIS **"rock,"** HIS **"refuge."**

There's so much more in this psalm, but before we wrap it up for today, I hope we notice something David realizes in the last two verses, **"...that power belongs to God, and lovingkindness is Yours, O Lord."** God has both the POWER and the WILL to help us in difficult times. As we discussed earlier (based on verse 9), unlike the **"men of low degree"** or the **"common people"** (who might have the will but not the ability), and unlike the **"men of rank"** or the **"important people"** (who might have the ability but not the will), God has both the POWER and the MOTIVE to help us during difficult times. God is all-powerful, and he also loves us! That's an awesome combination! Think about it this way: If God is all-powerful but doesn't love us, that's a terrifying picture, isn't it? It has been said that power without love is brutality. In the same way, if God loves us but doesn't have the power to help us, that's pretty pathetic, "Yep, I love you people, but unfortunately I am unable to help." That's pretty sad, isn't it? It has been said that love without power is weakness. In truth, though, God is all-powerful, and he also loves us. Sometimes we will sing the song, "Holy, Holy, Holy," and in that song, we praise God as being "merciful and mighty." We see the same thought in Nehemiah's prayer in Nehemiah 1:5, where he approaches God and praises God by describing God as, **"...the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments."** God is **"awesome,"** but he is also a God of **"lovingkindness."** And that is what this Psalm is all about: People will let us down, but God is our Rock. He is both merciful and mighty. And this brings David a sense of peace, the ability to rest, because he knows that God is both powerful and kind.

### Conclusion:

We come to the "So what?" question. What does this psalm really mean for us? Yes, people will let us down, and yes, God is our rock, but so what? What do we do about it? How can I be different tomorrow than I am today because we have studied this little piece of God's word? Most of us are taking a bit of a time-out from the world right now, but in an hour or two or maybe in a day or so, most of us will jump right back into a world full of phone calls, and notifications, and interruptions, and stress, and all kinds of noise and distractions. How can we take what David writes here, and how can we allow this psalm to change us? Going into this, I do find it

interesting that David never seems to ASK anything of God in this psalm. Sometimes David will ask God for some kind of victory. Sometimes David will ask God to crush his enemies. He will sometimes ask God to smash their teeth out, to make their children orphans. But not here. David isn't asking anything in this song. But instead, in terms of action, David seems to focus on himself here.

And the first action, in terms of a response to people letting us down and God being our rock, is simply to ***"wait in silence for God only."*** Remember: As we started this study, we looked at that emphasis on ***"only."*** In Hebrew, it's at the beginning of a sentence four times in this psalm. So, instead of putting our trust in people (who will often let us down), David seems to be encouraging us by his own example to ***"wait in silence for God only."*** And so, instead of constantly stressing out about people letting us down, sometimes we might just need to force ourselves to slow down and to wait for God. And the idea is: When I am betrayed by a friend, when I feel like that wall that's about to get knocked over, I may need to make the decision to let God worry about this situation. It seems to me that Satan would love for us to get so stressed out over something that we neglect the word of God and prayer. Satan wants us to put our trust in a rickety fence, but our trust is not in ourselves, our trust is in God, our rock. So, in terms of answering the "So what?" question, our first response (like David) is to ***"wait in silence for God only,"*** putting our trust not in ourselves, but in him. So, ***"wait in silence for God only."***

The other very practical application of this passage comes in David's advice (in verse 8) that we are to, ***"Pour out your heart before Him."*** We do this, because we know that God is our ***"refuge."*** It's almost like the one phone call you supposedly get when you go to jail. I'm guessing that's not a thing anymore. But if we were in trouble and had one phone call, who would we call? Would we call somebody who has let us down over and over again, or would we call somebody who's been reliable? I'm thinking of a situation that happened back in our college days. I had an old car that was prone to breaking down, and for some reason I drove from Henderson, Tennessee, up to Jackson, about 30 minutes away, but my car stalled in the middle of a four-lane highway. I was out there in the turning lane, and the car was completely dead, and this was at night. Well, I walked to a nearby gas station and found a pay phone. A pay phone was something we had in the olden days, when you could use quarters to make a phone call. It was an amazing thing. However, I only knew two numbers by heart: My roommate and best friend, Richard (from Monterey, California), and my future wife. I put the quarters in and call Richard, but it's busy. We used to get what was known as a "busy signal" back in those days. Well, that's not good, so I put the quarters in again and call Keola. Same thing, another busy signal. I wait a bit and try Richard again. Still busy. I wait a bit and try Keola again. Still busy. After an hour or two, I finally get through, and she says, "Oh, I've been talking to Richard! We were wondering where you were!" People will let us down! King David's advice, then, is to ***"pour out our hearts before HIM,"*** because he is our refuge.

Now, does this seem a little strange, that we ***"wait in silence for God only"*** while simultaneously ***"pouring out our hearts before the Lord"***? How is it possible to ***"wait in silence"*** as we ***"pour out our hearts before the Lord"***? As I was checking the various translations, I noticed that the Christian Standard Bible (and some others) use the word ***"rest"*** instead of ***"silence."*** It's almost like the difference between "silence" and "quietness." It's not necessarily a matter of not making a noise, but it's the idea of waiting "quietly." We might compare it to a good marriage. We can be at rest with each other, knowing that they want what is best for us. And so, as opposed to arguing with God, we approach him with respect, knowing that he also wants what is best for us. And in this sense of quietness, we ***"pour out our hearts before the Lord."*** Our hearts are at rest, because we share our concerns with the Lord. We are talking, then, about a daily decision to turn to God, opening our hearts, and allowing him to share the load. We think of Peter's advice in 1 Peter 5:6-7, where he tells us to ***"...humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."*** This is what David is doing here.

When we pray, we open ourselves up completely, hiding nothing. We can be real with God as we pray. He already knows, so we might as well tell him the truth. No problem is too big or too small to **“pour out”** before the Lord. Meet him in his word. Sing praise. Be thankful. Seek his face. Ask for wisdom.

Wait in silence for God only, and pour out your heart before the Lord.

Before we partake of the Lord’s Supper, let’s go to God in prayer:

Our Father in Heaven,

You are our rock and refuge, our only hope and salvation. This morning, we wait in silence for you only, and we come to you, pouring out our hearts before you in prayer. Most of us know from personal experience that people will let us down. Many of us have let others down. But we also know that we can trust you with every thought we can possibly have. We know that you always want what is best for us. We know that you are a God not only of awesome power, but of great love as well. You are our rock and only hope.

We come to you this morning in the name of Jesus, your Son. Thank you, Father, for hearing our prayer. Lord, come quickly. AMEN.

To comment on this lesson: [fourlakeschurch@gmail.com](mailto:fourlakeschurch@gmail.com)