

## When I Am Afraid Psalm 56

### When I Am Afraid Introduction

- This psalm begins with David crying out to God in the midst of trouble.
- He is afraid and has good reason.
  
- This psalm ends with confident faith.
- David is thanking God for his help even before he receives it.
  - *How did David get this confidence? Why, he prayed himself into it. If you will read the psalm, you will see very clearly the process by which a man comes to that serene, triumphant trust that the battle is won even whilst it is raging around him.*
    - *Alexander Maclaren (1826 – 1910)*

### When I Am Afraid Psalm 56:0

- The Dove on Far-Off Terebinths ... Miktam
- These terms no doubt have something to do with the performance of the psalm.
- Unfortunately, we don't know for sure what they mean.
  
- Of David, when the Philistines seized him in Gath.
- There were two occasions when David fled to Gath.
  - 1 Samuel 21 and 27
- Both of them happened when he was on the run from Saul.
- Neither one tells us of the Philistines seizing him.
- Conclusion: We are not 100% sure when this happened.
  - *The lack of evidence of David having been a captive in Gath has led some to argue that the heading of this psalm is unreliable. However, it seems better to assume that we do not have an account of everything that happened in David's life. He may have had experiences in Gath that are not recorded in the Bible.*
    - *Samuel Ngewa, Africa International University, Nairobi*
  
- With all due respect to David, running from Saul to Gath has to be one of the dumber things he ever did.
- Gath was a Philistine city and it was Goliath's birthplace.
- What kind of help did David hope to get from then after killing Goliath?
- Conclusion: Fear can cause us to do irrational things.

### When I Am Afraid Psalm 56:1-2

- David was often in trouble.
- He suffered under the attacks, slander, pride and plotting of evil men.
- He is wise to cry out for God's grace.

### When I Am Afraid Psalm 56:3-4

- 56:3 When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.
- David's trust is intentional.
- Fear is an opportunity to exercise faith.
  
- 56:4 In God I trust; I shall not be afraid.
- Trust in God is the means by which we overcome fear.
- When we see that the object of our trust is deserving of it, our fears fall by the wayside.
  
- **Remember this:**
- It's not the strength of our faith, but the object of our faith that makes all the difference.
  
- 56:4 What can flesh do to me?
- The Hebrew word *bašar* can mean "meat" for eating or the "flesh" of the body.
- It can also be used to stress the transient nature of humans when compared with God.
  - Genesis 6:1–3 (ESV) When man began to multiply on the face of the land ... <sup>3</sup>Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years."

### When I Am Afraid Psalm 56:5-7

- David emphasizes the persistent nature of his enemies' attacks. They are unrelenting.
- Still, he cries out to God.

### When I Am Afraid Psalm 56:8-11

- 56:8 Are they not in your book?
- Sometimes the psalmists complain that God does not notice their suffering.
- Sometimes we do the same.
- Here, David is confident that God sees and records it all.
  - *No tear of the child of God falls unnoticed and forgotten. Remember how the sinner's tears were precious to the Master, whose feet they [washed]. As rainbows are made of drops of water, so does God keep our tears to transmute into songs. You will meet your tears again in rainbows.*
    - *F. B. Meyer (1847 – 1929)*
  
- 56:9 This I know, that God is for me.
- 56:11 In God I trust; I shall not be afraid.
- Trust in God is the means by which we overcome fear.
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- **Remember this:**
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## When I Am Afraid Psalm 56:12-13

- David now stops to give thanks to the Lord.
- His prayer and intentional trust has brought him from a place of fear to a place of confidence.
- He is so confident that all will be well that he thanks God for his deliverance already.
  - *[David] is so sure of the deliverance as coming that he sings of it as past. He is still in the very thick of the trouble and the fight, and yet he says, "It is as good as over. Thou hast delivered."*
    - Alexander Maclaren (1826 – 1910)
  - *This is a wonderful expression of faith. When we understand the nature of God and his love for us, we can thank him for what we ask even before we receive it.*
    - Samuel Ngewa, Africa International University, Nairobi

## When I Am Afraid Conclusion

- All of us are subject to fear at times.
- The trick is, as David learned, to do the right thing when fear comes upon us.
- David learned, when he was afraid, to trust in the Lord.
- **What does it mean to trust in the Lord?**
  - Don't allow yourself to succumb to pessimism, sadness and gloom over your troubles.
  - Keep looking to Jesus and keep moving forward despite how you feel.
  - Draw comfort from God's Word.
  - That is what David did.
  - You might even try reading through a few psalms when your heart is troubled.
  - Expect God to help you.
  - God doesn't appreciate it when we doubt His love for us.
  - He loves it when we trust in His character.
  - Luke 12:6–7 (ESV) <sup>6</sup>Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. <sup>7</sup>Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.
- **Why should we trust in the Lord?**
  - Because He is faithful, wise, loving, just and merciful, etc.
  - Think about His attributes and your troubles may begin to seem smaller and less significant.
  - Because we really don't have any choice.
  - We often confront problems that we can't solve ourselves.
  - Overcoming the impossible is the very nature of the cross.
  - If we can trust God with matters of life, death and eternity, we ought to be able to trust him with anything.