

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

PSALMS 50-57

It's been said, "He that would be wise, let him read the Proverbs - and he that would be holy, let him read the Psalms." That's well stated.

The psalms are more than a song book. They're an ancient blog where the author carries on a conversation about his experiences with God.

The psalms are the diary of a heart hungry for God. The psalms are "spiritual lighter fluid." Each psalm primes us to be set on fire for God.

PSALM FIFTY is written by Asaph - along with Heman and Jeduthan he was one of David's 3 chief musicians. He was a Temple worship leader.

Asaph authored 12 psalms - the others are in sequence, Psalms 73-83.

Psalms 50 also looks to the return of the Messiah at the end of the age. It outlines for two groups the criteria by which they'll be judged: *Verses 1-15* speaks to God's people, Israel... *verses 16-23* informs the wicked.

Psalms 50 begins, "The Mighty One, God the LORD, has spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun to its going down."

A Baylor University study revealed that 24.4% Americans believe in a *distant God*. That God created the universe and the laws of nature that govern it, but does little to interact with the universe or judge humans.

God ranks *low on engagement* and *low on emotion*.

They believe God set the world in motion – *wound up the clock* - then just walked away. The Creator spoke the universe into existence - then chose to have no other conversations. *Asaph would terribly disagree.*

He begins Psalm 50 by noting that God has not only spoken in the past, but He continues to speak from the rising to the setting of the sun – every day, all day God is speaking of His grace and glory to listening ears.

Hebrews 1 tells us, “God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by his Son...” God reveals Jesus to hearts that believe.

According to Psalm 50 God is speaking, but are we listening?

“Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God will shine forth.” Zion was God’s nickname for Jerusalem. And from the city “God will shine forth.”

Some folks see this psalm as prophetic of the last days when Jesus returns to earth, establishes His kingdom, and reigns from Jerusalem.

“Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous all around Him.

He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people: "Gather My saints together to Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice."

All God's covenants are sealed with a sacrifice. Whenever God makes a deal with man He signs it in blood.

Even the New Covenant was sealed with the blood of His Son.

“Let the heavens declare His righteousness, for God Himself is Judge. Selah” Remember “Selah” is an instruction “to pause and think.”

And here's a matter we should think over... One day we'll all meet our Maker. We'll stand before God and give an account of the life we've lived.

"Hear, O My people, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify against you; I am God, your God! I will not rebuke you for your sacrifices or your burnt offerings, which are continually before Me.

I will not take a bull from your house, nor goats out of your folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills.”

I love a story told by Howard Hendricks, a long time professor at Dallas Seminary. In its early days the school hovered near bankruptcy.

At one point it looked as if they'd close their doors. On the afternoon the debt was due the leaders of the seminary gathered in the office to pray.

When it came his turn Dr. Harry Ironside prayed, “Lord, I know you own cattle on a thousand hills. Please sell some and send us the money.”

Dr. Ironside didn't know that a Texas cattleman had just walked into the office and handed over the proceeds he'd made from a cattle deal. He told the secretary he felt God wanted him to give the profits to the school.

She tapped on the door and handed the check to Seminary president, Lewis Sperry Chafer. When he saw the check was for the exact amount they needed, he shouted to Ironside, "Harry, God sold the cattle."

Tonight, why don't you ask God to sell off a few cattle for you?

These verses were intended to straighten out a misconception.

Over the course of Hebrew history, Israel had slaughtered millions of animals in sacrifice to God. A river of blood flowed from the brazen altar.

But God didn't order the sacrifices because he likes the smell of BBQ.

The whole bloody affair taught a lesson. *The wages of sin is death...* a life had to be taken for sin to be forgiven. Sacrifices were important not because they meet some need in God, but because they were our opportunity to express a repentant attitude and our faith in God.

In verse 10, God is saying why would He want a bull or goat when "every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills."

Never give an offering because you think God needs the money!

Never serve because you think God can't get the job done

without you.

When you offer God a sacrifice it's not because He needs what you're giving – *it's because you need to give*. A sacrifice reveals a right attitude.

Verse 11, “I know all the birds of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. “If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and all its fullness.” God’s preoccupation with sacrifice is not because He likes steak – or that He gets hungry.

Even if God did grow hungry and need a meal He wouldn’t come crawling to us. He doesn’t need anything you or I can offer Him.

In fact, God has no needs. The universe belongs to Him.

He continues, “Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?”

It’s interesting, when the Romans sacked Jerusalem in 70 AD it left the Jews without a Temple, and nowhere to offer the sacrifices the Law had required. For last 2000 years Judaism has been a hollow religion.

But there’s a reason God allowed the destruction of the Temple, and the end of the sacrifices. They were no longer needed. Jesus took their place. I love what author John Philips writes, “All (Judaism) ever stood for, represented, taught, or prophesied has been fulfilled in Christ.”

Verse 14 “Offer to God thanksgiving (be thankful), and pay your vows to the Most High (be truthworthy). Call upon Me in the day of trouble (be trusting); I will deliver you, and you shall

glorify Me."

Here's what God desires... a *thankful, trustworthy, trusting* heart.

"But to the wicked God says: "What right have you to declare My statutes, or take My covenant in your mouth, seeing you hate instruction and cast My words behind you?" God opposes the hypocrite. He teaches God's Word, but refuses to live it.

"When you saw a thief, you consented with him, and have been a partaker with adulterers. You give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son. These things you have done, and I kept silent; you thought that I was altogether like you; but I will rebuke you, and set them in order before your eyes." Here's the mistake we often make.

We project our own limitations and attitudes on God. "Well if I were God I would have judged the world by now. He must be unable or unwilling..."

Not necessarily, God doesn't think like a man. Just because He's silent about sin at the moment, doesn't mean He can't break the silence soon!

"Now consider this, you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver: whoever offers praise glorifies Me; and to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God."

PSALM FIFTY-ONE is prefaced "A Psalm of David when

Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.”

About a year had past since David strolled out on the balcony and saw a naked woman bathing in the moonlight. The random sighting aroused desire. Lust and curiosity morphed into adultery and murder.

David defiled the woman - then murdered her husband. He tried his best to cover his tracks. David thought it was all over – but what you sweep under the rug has a tendency of not wanting to stay there.

Every person has two choices when they sin. You can either **confess** or **conceal**. Confess and God will forgive, but **conceal** and God will **reveal**.

David failed to confess his sin, and the king caused a royal mess.

That’s why God sent the prophet Nathan to pay David a visit.

Nathan told the story of a rich man who stole his poor neighbor's only lamb to serve to his friend. The king was clear and decisive. Such a man needed to die. **“Who was this man?”** Nathan fired back **"You are the man."**

I believe David was glad he’d been found out. His guilty conscience had tormented him day and night. Now the masquerade is over.

Psalm 51 is David’s prayer of confession. It’s a classic chapter.

David pours out his heart, **“Have mercy upon me, O God,**

according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.” In other words, erase it from my record.

“Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.”

When David tried to sweep it under the rug it didn't work. It tormented him. His sin became a burr in his saddle – a pebble in his shoe.

Rather than swept it under a rug, he asks God to vacuum it away.

“Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight - that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.” Wait a minute... David sinned against Bathsheba, his other wives and children, Uriah, the nation... but he says to God, “Against You only have I sinned.” First and foremost David's sin was an offence to God.

There is never a harmless sin. All sin breaks the heart of God.

Verse 5 “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.” David admits for himself and for all humans it's our nature to sin. We're sinners from the start! It's not just that we slip up on occasion and miss the mark – our aim is warped. None of us shoot-straight.

“Sin doesn't make us a sinner. We sin because we are a sinner.”

“Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.” God demands that we be ruthlessly honest with ourselves. This is part of our repentance. We need to admit our need.

“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean...” Hyssop was a shrub.

The hyssop branch had a spongy texture, and was used by the Jewish priests to sprinkle blood on the sacrifice. David wants to be purified.

“Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow...” The word “wash” refers to women who took their garments to the river to beat the dirt out on the rocks. David gives God permission to beat the evil out of him if needed.

If you want to be clean God may have to scrub and beat out the dirt. Are we willing to allow the Divine launderer to do whatever is needful?

“Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” God washes and renews a man’s mind, but we’re given a new spirit.

Here David asks God to create within him a new heart. He wants God to cut out his old, sin nature, and plant within him a new nature. You and I need a spirit that’s compliant and consistent, not hard and rebellious.

And the good news is that God specializes in heart transplants.

David prays in verse 11 “Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.” David is an Old Testament believer who lacks the assurance offered to us under the New Covenant.

He recognizes that sin separates man from God - and he knows he’s sinned - so he prays that God will spare him sin’s consequence.

He adds, “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit.” When Jesus pardons a New Testament believer we’re forgiven of all our sin – *past, present, and future*. We don’t lose our salvation because we sin, but we certainly can lose our joy.

You’ll probably never hear a therapist or psychologist say it, but a major cause of anxiety and depression in our culture is un-confessed sin.

I’ve read of a trend in Roman Catholicism. In 2005, 42% of practicing Catholics said they never visit the confessional booth. Only 2% said they go regularly to confession. I would applaud this trend if it meant Roman Catholics were learning to by-pass the priest and go directly to God.

But I’m afraid there’s another cause that also affects Protestants. The notion of sin and importance of confession are waning in popularity.

People today want to rationalize their mistakes rather admit their sin.

Yet the human psyche was never designed to carry the weight of guilt.

You rid yourself of guilt and shame not by *denying sin*, or *redefining sin*, or *excusing sin* – but by *confessing sin*. Repentance restores our joy.

Verse 13 “Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You.” David promises to teach others from his mistakes.

Psalm 32 was an effort for David to “teach transgressors.”

“Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart - these, O God, You will not despise.” If a burnt offering could’ve cleansed David he would’ve offered a million bulls and goats – but it took more...

God wanted “a broken and a contrite heart.”

David’s confession expresses such a heart... and in response to his brokenness God’s Spirit restored to David the joy of his salvation!

“Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem. Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering; then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.”

PSALM FIFTY-TWO is addressed “To the Chief Musician.” It’s said to be, “A Contemplation of David when Doeg the Edomite went and told Saul, and said to him, ‘David has gone to the house of Ahimelech.’”

1 Samuel 22 tells us about a dog named Doeg who ratted on David.

When David went to the Tabernacle at Nob, Doeg saw him, and raced to King Saul to report David’s whereabouts. Saul was so outraged that the priest, Ahimelech, had helped David he ordered the execution of the entire priestly family. Doeg himself took his sword and slaughtered 85 priests.

When news of what happened reached David he wrote Psalm 52...

“Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man?

The goodness of God endures continually. Your tongue devises destruction, like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. Beware... the sharpest knife is the human tongue. It can cut and kill.

Here’s a riddle: “I’m more deadly than the screaming shell of a gun. I win without killing. I break hearts, and wreck lives. I travel on the wings of the wind... I have no regard for truth, no respect for justice, no mercy for the defenseless. My victims are as the sands of the sea, and often as innocent. I never forget and seldom do I forgive. What’s my name?

Well, *you guessed it, “Gossip”*. The tongue is deadly thing.

David exposes Doeg, “You love evil more than good, lying rather than speaking righteousness. Selah You love all

devouring words, you deceitful tongue. God shall likewise destroy you forever; He shall take you away, and pluck you out of your dwelling place, and uproot you from the land of the living. Selah” God sees to it Doeg suffers a worse fate than the priest.

Verse 5 is an ominous prediction, “God shall destroy you forever.”

Doeg will become an example of what happens to a wicked man.

Verse 6, “The righteous also shall see and fear, and shall laugh at him, saying, "Here is the man who did not make God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness."

But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever.” The city of Nob, the home of the priests, was located on the Mount of Olives. David was surrounded by olive trees.

An olive tree is evergreen. It grows all year, under all circumstances. David too will flourish. His faith in God made him an all-season saint.

Psalm 52 ends by forecasting Doeg’s demise, and David’s deliverance. God will destroy Doeg, but David will be as fruitful as an evergreen tree.

Verse 9 “I will praise You forever, because You have done it; and in the presence of Your saints I will wait on Your name, for it is good.”

And among the same olive trees Jesus was betrayed by another Doeg. Judas told the Sanhedrin the whereabouts of

Jesus, as Doeg did to David.

It reminds me of the man who lived to be 100 years old. A reporter asked him, “What’s your greatest accomplishment?”

The old man answered, “Well, I’ve lived 100 years and I don’t have an enemy in the world.” Later, he added, “I’ve out-lived all my enemies.”

In Psalm 52, David is saying God will see to it he outlives Doeg.

PSALM FIFTY-THREE is nearly identical to [Psalm 14](#). Perhaps it was similar lyrics sung to a different tune. Tonight we’re going to just read through the song. For commentary I’ll refer you back to Psalm 14.

Psalm 53, “The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, and have done abominable iniquity; there is none who does good. God looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. Every one of them has turned aside; they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not one.” Paul quotes these verses in Romans 3 to prove we’re all sinners.

Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge, who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon God?

There they are in great fear where no fear was, for God has scattered the bones of him who encamps against you; you have put them to shame, because God has despised them. Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When God brings back the captivity of His people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad.”

PSALM FIFTY-FOUR is “To the Chief Musician. With stringed instruments.” This psalm sounded best with a string ensemble.

It was “A contemplation of David when the Ziphites went and said to Saul, ‘Is David not hiding with us?’” While David is on the subject of enemies who tried to rat him out - why not deal with the Ziphites?

Like Doeg, the Ziphites ratted on David’s whereabouts - 1 Samuel 23 and 26. On two occasions their leads helped Saul set a trap.

“Save me, O God, by Your name, and vindicate me by Your strength. Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.

For strangers have risen up against me, and oppressors have sought after my life; they have not set God before them. **Selah**” David never tried to harm the Ziphites – he couldn’t figure out what they had against him.

“Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is with those who uphold my life. He will repay my enemies for their evil. Cut them off in Your truth. I will freely sacrifice to You; I will praise Your name, O LORD, for it is good.

For He has delivered me out of all trouble; and my eye has seen its desire upon my enemies.” When I fly, rarely do I think about the pilot... *until we hit a little turbulence*. This is why we sail through rough air.

God doesn’t want us to stop trusting our pilot, Captain Jesus.

In Psalm 54 David gets ratted-out by strangers, but that's a relatively easy trial to handle compared to what he faces in **PSALM FIFTY-FIVE**.

You expect as much from your enemies, but not from your friends.

In Psalm 55 David has to deal with deeper wounds. He's betrayed by a former friend. His buddy joins a coup against him. There's an old saying, "Against a foe I can defend, but heaven help me against a disloyal friend."

David begins, "Give ear to my prayer, O God, and do not hide Yourself from my supplication. Attend to me, and hear me; I am restless in my complaint, and moan noisily, because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked; for they bring down trouble upon me, and in wrath they hate me." David is under attack, but not just any attack.

"My heart is severely pained within me, and the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me, and horror has overwhelmed me." David was no stranger to danger.

He had his share of enemies, but this was no typical, run-of-the-mill trial David faces in Psalm 55. His son, Absalom, has rebelled against him and wants to take his throne. David's friends are fleeing to the other side.

Absalom stole his *crown*, his *city*, his *concubines*, and his *counselors*.

"So I said, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. Indeed, I would wander far off, and remain in

the wilderness. Selah

I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest."

David's first reaction to this trial was to just run away. Have you ever felt like running – getting away from it all? He wishes he had wings as a dove.

Don't ever forget, God might tell us to *refresh*, but never to *retreat*.

Our spiritual armor in Ephesians 6 has no protection for the backside. God never wants us to turn and run. With His strength and wisdom and backbone we can face our problems and stand up to our enemies.

Always remember, when you run from a problem, you take your biggest problem with you... YOU! Deal with the problem and it makes a better you.

A London Tabloid once offered a prize for the best answer to the question, "What is wrong with the world?" Christian philosopher, GK Chesterton won the grand prize. He responded simply, "I am."

Verse 9 "Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues, for I have seen violence and strife in the city. Day and night they go around it on its walls; iniquity and trouble are also in the midst of it. Destruction is in its midst; oppression and deceit do not depart from its streets.

For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me; then I could hide from him." I'll never forget being asked by a group of pastors, "What has been your greatest

disappointment in ministry?” It was an easy question.

With any hesitation I responded, “Wounds inflicted by my friends.” I’d rather face 10,000 enemy troops than to get a friend’s knife in my back.

And this was true of David. One man particularly had betrayed him.

David speaks to him directly in verse 13, “But it was you, a man my equal, my companion and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in the throng.” We learn from Israel’s history Ahithophel was David’s “companion.”

They walked to the Temple together. They worshipped together. These two men were more than blood brothers. They shared spiritual ties.

But their friendship ran amok when David tore apart Ahithophel’s family. Ahithophel had a granddaughter... her name was “*Bathsheba*”.

Ahithophel could never let go of the bitterness he felt toward David for violating Bathsheba and murdering Uriah. Apparently, the first opportunity that arose Ahithophel turned on David and joined in Absalom’s revolt.

It crushed David to have his *best friend* become an *avowed enemy*.

Verse 15, “Let death seize them; let them go down alive into hell, for wickedness is in their dwellings and among them.” David cries out to God to take vengeance on his enemies. Jesus prayed for God to forgive them.

“As for me, I will call upon God, and the LORD shall save me.

Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice. He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle that was against me, for there were many against me. God will hear, and afflict them, even He who abides from of old. Selah

Because they do not change, therefore they do not fear God.”

Again David speaks of his betrayers. “He has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him; he has broken his covenant.

The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.”

Ahithophel was a skilled conniver. He pledged allegiance to David’s face – then betrayed the king the moment he turned his back.

“Cast your burden on the LORD, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved. But You, O God, shall bring them down to the pit of destruction; bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in You.”

PSALM FIFTY-SIX is set to a tune called, “The Silent Dove in Distant Lands”. I have no idea, but the title sounds like a country song to me.

Some Bible teachers see in the title of the Psalm 56 an inference to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He is indeed “**The Silent Dove in Distant Lands.**”

The Holy Spirit is a long way from home, and He works silently in the hearts of men - but his ministry is powerful and strategic.

The psalm is also labeled, “**A Michtam of David when the Philistines captured him in Gath.**” David went to Gath, home of Goliath, naively thinking his enemies would grant him exile. Instead, they took him prisoner. He escaped only by pretending madness and insanity.

“**Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up; fighting all day he oppresses me. My enemies would hound me all day, for there are many who fight against me, O Most High.**

Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?

All day they twist my words; all their thoughts are against me for evil.

They gather together, they hide, they mark my steps, when they lie in wait for my life. Shall they escape by iniquity? In anger cast down the peoples, O God! You number my wanderings; put my tears into Your bottle; are they not in Your book?” Here’s an incredible comfort...

Notice too, the first example in history of *bottled water*.

God loves us and cares for us so much that He gathers our

tears and keeps them bottled up. For some of us that might be an 80-gallon drum.

And one day His joy might just compensate us for the tears we've shed. Who knows if He won't just turn our tears into a sweet elixir?

But notice the implication. God is so concerned for our feelings that He's aware of every single tear that rolls down our cheeks.

He knows and understands our sorrows better than we do. He sees our tears as liquid prayers. Not a single teardrop escapes God's attention.

“When I cry out to You, then my enemies will turn back; this I know, because God is for me. In God (I will praise His word), in the LORD (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid.

What can man do to me? Vows made to You are binding upon me, O God; I will render praises to You, for You have delivered my soul from death. Have You not kept my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?” Notice where he found his footing? Verse 10 praises “**God's word.**” The word of God gives traction to our faith.

PSALM FIFTY-SEVEN, like Psalms 16, as well as 56-60, are all labeled “**A Michtam of David.**” *But what is a Michtam?* There are 3 possibilities.

“**Michtam**” can mean “**jewel**” – these were favorite psalms of David.

It can also mean “**engraved.**” These psalms were not to be

forgotten.

A third possibility is "hidden." They have a below the surface meaning.

Psalm 57 is "A Michtam of David when he fled from Saul into the cave."

Recall the story, David was hiding from Saul in the very cave the king chose to use as a *Jiffy Johnny*. When the king came out of the sunlight into the dark cave he couldn't see David's men in the shadows.

As King Saul squatted down to do his business David could've killed him. Instead, he slipped up, and clipped a portion off his royal robe.

Psalm 57 describes what went on in David's heart at the time.

Notice also the tune chosen for these lyrics. It was "Set to **Do Not Destroy.**" Based on David's attitude toward Saul, how appropriate...

Saul is grunting as David sneaks up on him. David could've destroyed him, but instead he refuses to take matters into his own hands.

David waited and trusted God to bring about **His will His way!**

"Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by." Like a baby chick seeking protection under his mother's wings, David has run to God in the face of serious calamities.

And obviously, this is an appropriate response for us all. Recall in Matthew 23:37. Jesus looked over Jerusalem, and recounted how often He wanted to shelter Israel as a hen gathers her chicks.

“I will cry out to God Most High, to God who performs all things for me.” Note the words “all things” in italics. This means they weren’t in the original text. Translators added them to help with the readability of the passage.

But leave out the words “all things” – and the verse becomes a fill-in-the-blank. It’s as if God is giving you carte-blanch. What do you need?

Get more specific than “all things” – what’s the *one thing* you need?

He shall send from heaven and save me; He reproaches the one who would swallow me up. Selah God shall send forth His mercy and His truth.”

My soul is among lions; I lie among the sons of men who are set on fire, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let Your glory be above all the earth.

They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down; they have dug a pit before me; into the midst of it they themselves have fallen. Selah” God saw to it that David’s enemies fell into their own traps.

Before Saul stepped into the cave that day, he was the *pursuer* – David the *prey*. But God turned the tables. Saul’s life ended up in David’s hands.

Verse 7 “My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and give praise.” The OKJ translates “steadfast” as “my heart is fixed.”

Like a fighter pilot whose guns lock onto a target, David fixes his eyes on God. This is the key to following Jesus. No matter the circumstances and distractions we need to “lock on” and “fix” our focus on Jesus.

“Awake, my glory! Awake, lute and harp! I will awaken the dawn.”

It reminds me of the barnyard rooster who was always bragging to the other animals. He said every morning the sun rose just to hear him crow.

Well David has something to crow about! He says, “I will awaken the dawn.” He’ll *wake up the sun* and *awaken his harp* to praise the Lord.

Psalm 57 closes with an eruption of praise! “I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing to You among the nations. For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens, and Your truth unto the clouds. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let Your glory be above all the earth.”

Let me talk a little about our Christmas Eve services on Wednesday.

We'll have two identical services - at 5:00 and 7:00 pm. And Christmas Eve will have plenty of the traditional elements... *candles around the sanctuary, Christmas carols, the kids have a birthday cake for Jesus, and plenty of special Christmas music.*

But here's what God is pressing on my heart for Christmas Eve...

I'm concerned some people can drift through Christmas with a cavalier and nonchalant attitude about Jesus. Our culture barely mentions Jesus.

It's "*Happy Holidays*" and "*Winter Break*" - not "*Merry Christmas.*"

It's too easy to dismiss Jesus... *as a baby – in a manger...* Hey, Jesus grew up and climbed out... One day every human who's ever lived will stand before Jesus and give an account of the life they've lived.

If you have a friend or family member that needs to know the truth about Jesus – and you're concerned they could die and go to hell – let me encourage you to bring them with you on Christmas Eve.

I'm going to tell them the truth and wish them a Merry Christmas.

They'll certainly be loved, but they'll also be challenged...