

Title: *'It's Decision Time!'*

Date: *25th January 2015*

Scriptures: *Psalm 62:5-12; Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Mark 1:14-20;
1Corinthians 7:29-31*

Prayer for the Message: 'Heavenly Father, with whom nothing is ever impossible, please, in the name of Jesus Christ protect Your Word sown today from the evil one. May he not be able to snatch it away but may it become so deeply rooted within our hearts that nothing, not trouble and not pleasure may choke or suffocate it. We pray and ask these things with thanksgiving because we believe we have received the answer to our petitions in the wonderful name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Message: 'It's Decision Time!'

David, the writer of **Psalm 62**, was surrounded by enemies, who wanted nothing more than to destroy him. In **verse 3** David writes that his enemies were treating him like *a leaning wall, like a tottering fence*, trying with all their might to push him over.

In such a situation it would have been totally understandable if David had felt *discouraged or depressed* - in a similar situation I am sure most of us would have.

But **Psalm 62**, written at the time of all this hostility paints a very different picture. In this Psalm David's focus is not on His enemies - not on the situation he finds himself in - **but on his God!** He writes...

My hope and expectation are from Him

He only is my Rock and my salvation

He is my Defence and my Fortress

My Refuge is in God FOR He is my Rock of unyielding strength - He is my Rock of impenetrable hardness

Therefore my soul, wait only upon God and silently submit to Him.

Even though David is in danger - he doesn't petition God for anything - he doesn't ask God to destroy his enemies - he doesn't ask to be kept safe - he

doesn't pray for victory over his enemies - David, in **Psalm 62** asks God for nothing - *why?*

Because David has complete confidence and assurance in His God.

Do we?

Do we have such faith in our God - such confidence in Him and in His Word, that when we feel threatened, discouraged or depressed we don't come before His throne of grace with a list of petitions, *but* we come before Him simply to exalt Him and praise Him AND declare our faith in Him and in **Who He is!**

He is our *impenetrable Rock* - our *Defence* - our *Refuge* - our *Fortress* - We might feel like *a leaning wall* or like *a tottering fence* that is about to be pushed over - *but* our God, now that's a whole different story, our God is *our Rock and our Salvation*.

David's enemies are to *push him over*, but in spite of that David is trusting in God alone - his trust in God is so strong he doesn't petition God for a single thing.

It's decision time! In whom or what are we trusting in? In whom or what do we have faith in?

It is easy to trust God when things are going well - but in difficult situation do we still trust Him? **And** I believe God uses difficult situations to test our faith, how will we ever know if we have great faith like the centurion, who Jesus commended for his faith (**Matthew 8:10**), OR if we have little faith like that of Peter, who began to sink when he took his eyes off Jesus and *saw and felt the strong wind* (**Matthew 14:30**)

Hebrews 11:6 tells us that *'without faith, it is impossible to please and be satisfactory to Him. For whoever would come near to God must believe that God exists and that He is the rewarder of those who earnestly and diligently seek Him out.'*

Are we pleasing God - are we satisfactory to Him *because* in spite of what is going on around us - He is our *impenetrable Rock* - our *Defence* - our *Refuge* - our *Fortress* we are trusting in Him, leaning on Him, and relying on Him.

Is our confidence in Him at all times as was David's?

The very clear call of all our Scripture readings this week comes in the form of a challenge to trust in God and not in what is temporary, and unreliable. *After all* we are told in **Hebrews 13:8** that God is **always** the same, yesterday, today and forever, and in **Malachi 3:6** For He is the Lord and He does not change

But people change, circumstances change, and the economic climate changes - so let us release our desire to find security, wealth and satisfaction in the material things of this world and put our confidence in God at all times.

And this is what the apostle Paul is explaining to believers in Corinth in **1Corinthians 7:29-31**. Paul writes that the world as we know it is not going to last, so don't depend on the things, don't depend on people and don't depend on the experiences of this world - *trust in God at all times - wait only upon God.*

We should not be placing our hope and trust in things that cannot save us - *but in God for from Him comes our salvation.*

Could this be the repentance Jesus is calling for in **Mark 1:15** '...the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, have a change of mind which issues regret for past sins and in change of conduct for the better *and believe, trust in, rely on and adhere to the good news.*'

If so, then Jesus' call for repentance is as relevant for our lives today as it was when we were first born again, when we first heard the *good news*. *Because* we are all in danger of allowing the *things of this world* to knock our Lord God off the thrones of our lives - I heard someone say once that if we are worrying about anything we need to check God's position in our lives.

David wrote, *'God only is my Rock and my Salvation; He is my Defense and my Fortress, I shall not be moved.*

'The kingdom of God' is all about God's reign in the lives of His people - in our lives

When God reigns in our lives our priorities change - our security is Him - in His promise found in **Psalm 91 verse 11**, which says, *'For He will give His angels charge over you to accompany and defend and preserve you in all our ways of obedience and service,'* when we *lean and rely, and in Him confidently trust (v.2).*

When God reigns in our lives we don't have to accumulate wealth - for He has promised in **Philippians 4:19** to *'liberally supply, fill to the full our every need according to His glorious riches in glory in Christ Jesus.'* And

When God reigns in our lives His glory is reflected to others and they are attracted, drawn and desire to *'Come and see.'*

But it's not enough to just repent, God expects a change of conduct for the better; we also need to put positive faith in Jesus Christ and believe His promise of salvation as did David - surrounded by enemies **Psalm 62** reveals only a *peace that surpasses all understanding.*

Do we have *God's peace*, David certainly did, that tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and being content with its earthly lot of whatever sort that is.

Does that description of God's peace from *The Amplified Bible* describe the state of our souls?

Nineveh was a very significant city in the ancient world - she became the chief city of the most powerful empire in the world - the Assyrian Empire, whose mighty armies were known for their cruelty. All the surrounding nations were threatened by the power of the Assyrian Empire, including Israel.

But Nineveh was also an important city to God.

Its name is on the lips of God as the Book of Jonah begins and as it ends - God is concerned for this city

And possibly the story of Jonah and Nineveh is told as an *eye-opener* to the people of Israel - that while they, who know God, remain deaf to God's Word and stubbornly unrepentant - Nineveh responded to the call for repentance - they *believed in God and proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest of them to the least of them...neither man nor beast, herd or flock*, tasted anything.

Have we, like Israel, become complacent in our faith, have we allowed the enemy to get a foothold in our lives and in our fellowship - have we become distracted anxious and troubled about many things - when only one is needed - and that is to *wait only upon God and silently submit to Him, for my hope and your hope are from Him* and Him only!

Its decision time! Will we get our priorities right - will we repent if we have become too dependent on the things of the world - will we invite God back onto the throne of our hearts - to reign again in our lives - change our conduct for the better allowing God's glory to reflect to others? Will we not only repent, but also believe, believe God, believe His Word and know, that we know *with God rests my salvation and my glory; He is my rock of unyielding strength and impenetrable hardness, and my refuge is in God!!!*

Let us pray - I am not sure if you know that at the afternoon service of the Day of Atonement, the most solemn fast day in the Jewish liturgical year the message of Jonah is read because it underlines many great lessons...

- ✚ That it is impossible to run away from God
- ✚ God is concerned and takes pity on all His creation
- ✚ God is ever willing to accept true repentance. And so I am using one of the prayers from the Day of Atonement as our prayer of confession...

Prayer:

Prayer of confession: *Heavenly Father, we pour out our hearts to You as David did, for You alone are a refuge for us, a fortress and a high tower, You alone are our Lord and our God.*

We have grown accustomed to sin... (page 40 [] 'the message of Jonah')

Lord Jesus we cannot imagine leaving everything behind to follow You, as did Peter, Andrew, James and John; leaving family, friends and our work. But we know there are things in our lives that we need to get rid of.

Please show us how to leave behind critical thoughts (PAUSE), negative attitudes (PAUSE) and our unhelpful habits (PAUSE).

Forgive us Lord when we hold back from that which we know we are called to, and give us courage, humility, trust, and an awareness of Your presence with us in all we do.

And call us afresh Lord, to serve You as only we can - Lord we come willingly, knowing You will never let go of our hands. Jesus in Your name we pray with thanksgiving for the privilege of being called by You to love and serve the world, Amen.