

Series Title: **'Refreshed and Restored: A Summer in the Psalms'**

Message Title: **'When Your Back is Against the Wall'**

Scripture Source: **Psalm 27:1-6**

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### **When the Pressure Is On**

Can you remember a time when certain people turned on you? When you were criticised unjustly and spoken of falsely? Those can be very difficult circumstances. It may have been a marriage breakup that became very ugly and painful. It could have been the souring of a friendship or a work relationship and the taste is still bitter in your mouth. It may be a lingering tension with a parent or child.

You have paid a price, emotionally, physically, spiritually, relationally, maybe even financially. You feel depleted and weary. Wondering where you will gain strength and perspective to carry on. The pressure and pain are real. You are in good company. And I believe, with a man who can offer you significant hope and help along the way...for he has struggled and suffered in similar ways. His name is David. Before we get to know him better, can you put a name and circumstance before you...and hear his story and gain insight for your story? Insight and hope from God's heart to you.

### **David's Story**

He is one of the most esteemed men of the Scriptures. He was king of Israel for 40 years, beginning in 1010 B.C. He loved God passionately, led the people of God, the Jewish nation, with great diligence and skill for most of his tenure. Yet, he also failed miserably. He indulged his ego in shocking ways and resorted to ill fated, cowardly cover-ups. He suffered great losses personally and saw the Jewish kingdom bear the brunt of God's discipline for some of his wayward leadership steps. Members of his inner circle turned on him and his own son Absalom rebelled against him. (2 Samuel 14-19) Yet, David continued to return to God, asking for fresh forgiveness, strength and wisdom to move forward. Illustrate: Psalm 51.

### **David's Source of Restoration**

David learned that a refreshed and restored soul was not to be found in wealth, fame, pleasure, or power. He had all these in abundance. Yet, they could not nourish and strengthen his soul. He had learned from an early age that only an honest and trusting relationship with God could provide soul 'refreshment and restoration.' He learned of God's goodness and grace while tending his father's sheep in the pastures of Palestine. And now as King, he affirms the preciousness of a relationship with God.

### **Relationship...not Religion: Psalm 27:1-6, 8**

The precise nature and 'back story' of the relentless opposition is not chronicled for us. Yet, the rawness and yearning of his words resonate with a painful reality involving difficult people and harsh circumstances.

How does he start...where does he begin his reflection? With God. Vs. 1 David affirms a chosen faith in the living God. He understands God to be a completely reliable source of guidance, joy, hope, energy, and insight for the challenges of life. "The LORD is my light..." David regards God as his singular and only source of 'salvation.' God is his stronghold', his 'safe place.' In light of who God is and being in relationship with God, he poses, to himself this pertinent question..." whom shall I fear?" To David, the answer is obvious: no one.

## **Real Issues and Real Help**

David makes these affirmations in the face of real and painful realities. Vss.2-3 “When vandal hordes ride down ready to eat me alive, Those bullies and toughs fall flat on their faces. When besieged, I’m calm as a baby. When all hell breaks loose, I’m collected and cool.” (The Message) Illustrate: Psalm 62: God gives him poise, courage, perspective, and wisdom to face real issues and deal with them....”my heart will not fear...even then I will be confident.” The language of restoration is clearly spoken.

What does David do when ‘all hell breaks loose against him’? He turns first to God. Vs.4 David uses highly relational language and imagery. He is deliberate in his ‘ask’ of God.

A renewal of intimacy with God, a strong sense of the nearness of God in his hardship. “that I may dwell in the house of the LORD (expresses “God’s eternal, unchanging and faithful character to His purposes and promises”)...to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD...in his temple.” David chooses: “a preoccupation with God’s person and His will...” To the Jewish reader of these ancient words the image of the ‘temple, the house of the Lord’ was loaded with sacred meaning...‘God is in the house...God is near and yearns for relationship with us.’ David turns to God, first. Trusting God doesn’t mean the absence of hard times; it does mean the promise of his renewing presence with us. Even when his presence seems and feels obscure or hidden.

He anticipates God’s gracious help in a tough time. Vss.5-6 In the tough time, not before or after, God will grant him what he needs to endure...and if his life is lost, his soul will be secure. And that prospect fills his mouth with words of praise and worship. And at the heart of all, is this relentless yearning: “My heart says of you, “Seek his face! Your face, LORD, I seek.” Vs.8 And David does.

## **What of Us?**

What do we do first when the storms break in on us? We often panic, or try to take things into our own hands. Or we lash out at the accuser. Or we blame others for the harsh circumstance...or how would you answer?

- David teaches us to turn first to God. To “pour out our hearts before him.” Psalm 62:8 In specifics. Names. Events. Circumstances. Emotions. Fears. Write your psalm to God. Your words, your story.
- David teaches us to immerse our minds and hearts in the truth of God, revealed in the Scriptures and in the person of Jesus Christ. Please use the tools we have provided. Reading plan, book, and opportunities for conversations. Check out the library for books that teach about the character of God, the person of Jesus.
- David teaches us to choose to trust God for help along the way, to be open to receive guidance, hope, and strength from fellow followers/seekers of Christ. God will give us courage and wisdom to deal with people and circumstances that need to be addressed and not ignored.
- David reminds us that what matters foremost is a relationship with God, through faith in Jesus, God’s Son, our Saviour. Maybe that’s the first thing for you to attend to today...to give your life over to the care and leadership of Jesus. Can we help you begin? Next week, we will complete our study in Psalm 27, focusing on the choice and consequences of cultivating our relationship with God.