

## Trial and Triumph

Psalm 60:1-12

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March 17, 2004

We're continuing through the Psalms that we've been studying week by week, and tonight we're at Psalm 60. It's entitled, "A lament over defeat in battle and a prayer for help." It has probably one of the longest introductions of any Psalm. It says, "For the choir director; according to Shushan Eduth. A Mikhtam of David, to teach; when he struggled with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, and Joab returned, and smote twelve thousand of Edom in the Valley of Salt." May we pray.

*We pray, O Holy Spirit, Thou wouldst speak to us from Thy word, would draw our hearts to it, would teach us things that we can practically apply to our lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

(Psalm 60:1-3) "1 O God, Thou hast rejected us. Thou hast broken us; Thou hast been angry; O, restore us. 2 Thou hast made the land quake, Thou hast split it open; Heal its breaches, for it totters. 3 Thou hast made Thy people experience hardship; Thou hast given us wine to drink that makes us stagger."

It's interesting that David and his men were fighting between the two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates River. He had recently come to be king, and there were plenty of people still trying to unseat him. And they were trying to unite and expand and protect the boundaries of their kingdom, and they were right now, ironically, where our own troops are this very night in present day Iraq.

Things were going fairly well. Stability was developing, and everyone was somewhat encouraged when word came to David that his southern flank, the southern part of the kingdom was being invaded and attacked by a large force of Moabites. They'd broken through their defenses and were in dangerous positions—serious, dangerous breach had been made. The Moabites were not thought to be that strong, but somehow they had gotten together an alliance with others around the area and had attacked his soft underbelly. And he commissioned his big general, Joab, to go in there and engage the enemy from his soft underbelly. It's easy for us to say that. It may not even stick in your mind what I said, but I'm certain this will: Can you recall the look on President George W. Bush's face when they told him that the World Trade Center had been hit, especially when they told him the second plane had struck the towers? He must

have realized then, 'You know, the United States is very vulnerable.' Can you imagine how the President of the United States would look when our troops are between the Tigris and Euphrates as they are today, just like David's were, exactly like David's were, if word came to him, "Mr. President, somehow the southern border around Arizona and New Mexico and California has been breached. We knew people were coming across by the thousands, but somehow we didn't know that terrorists were among them"? And there have been multiple explosions in San Diego, in El Paso, Tucson, in Santa Fe, in Phoenix—they're all burning, and the enemy is making havoc of our southern, southwestern borders. You have precisely the position that David was in.

You say, "Well, that won't happen." Won't it? There were several documentaries produced by FOX News. One of them I saw twice in which the poor landowners along the Arizona border, particularly in a place called Oregon Pipes State Park, have had to put on uniforms and carry military rifles to try and protect their own land because every night hundreds, thousands, *thousands* of people come across there, illegal aliens. I saw one poor mother and father weeping because their son who is a border agent down there tried to stop them and they just killed him. But the most frightening that I saw while watching that documentary was a poor land owner held up a cloth. He said, "This is an Islamic prayer cloth. I'm finding several of them all around. Mostly people from Mexico and Latin America are Catholic or Pentecostal if they're anything, but none of them are Islamic." And then they said that the average cost to smuggle in a Hispanic is \$1500, but that the smugglers demand and get \$50,000 a head to smuggle in a terrorist. And they are in. They're pouring across our porous southwestern borders and the scenario I have given to you might well develop, as indeed Moab attacked the Southern Kingdom and poor David had to turn and send his best men to try to defend his own...his own country when he was way over at the Tigris and Euphrates River. There was a national tragedy that occurred and they're lamenting that here.

Notice here that in this national tragedy that has occurred, that everything that's said here is to God. Six times, six times he says, "Thou, Thou, Thou, Thou, Thou...Thou." There are no secondary causes here. He relates everything exactly back to God. 'And, Lord, You have rejected us. This would never have happened to Your chosen people, the people of Your covenant, if You had not permitted it. If You had not permitted this, it never would've happened. The Moabites never would've gotten in. It's by Your permission, Your sovereign decree that it happened. You've rejected us. You've cast us off. You're treating us with disdain and disgust. You've been angry. We're broken. You have shaken us terribly. It's like an earthquake. It's like we've had breaches in the walls. The earth is split. Heal its breaches for it totters. Thou hast made Thy people experience hardship. Thou hast given us wine to drink that makes us stagger.

Father, we're staggering around the enemy. The Moabites have pierced our breaches while we're way over in Iraq. The enemy has come in our lower,

exposed underbelly and we're in dire straights. We're staggering around like drunk men. We're so afraid and full of anxiety. O Lord, you've let this happen to us. You have your reasons but we know it comes from You. Thou hast made the land quake. Thou hast split it open. Thou hast made Thy people to experience hardship. Thou hast given us wine to drink that makes us stagger. Thou hast, Thou, Thou.'

I was once at a funeral and the preacher before me, being of a different persuasion theologically, said in effect, "I don't want anyone here to think God had anything to do with this untimely death of this young woman. God had nothing to do with it. If you want to assign any responsibility to this, assign it to yourself. I'll assign it to myself because we have not given enough money to find a cure for cancer. We found a cure for polio and a cure for this, that, and the other, so if we diligently seek, we can find a cure for cancer. Do not ascribe any of this to God but to man's own selfishness by not funding our research and our medical laboratories and so on to come up with a cure for cancer." And then it was my time to speak. I had a little bit different take. When I was with Walter Davis, who recently went to be with the Lord, Walter said, "For me to live and to die is gain." I walked in to see Charles Dillingham, and the last day I saw him he said, "Brister, I'm going to see Jesus. I'm so happy. I rejoice. I'm going to see Him." They saw their death squarely in God's hands, their time in God's hands. It's important to do cancer research and all of the kinds of research. We should fund them. But ultimately we ought to deal with God—not through secondary causes but deal with Him straight about the things that are in our lives, particularly the hardships, sometimes there because of sin, and sometimes they there for reasons He hasn't chosen to reveal to us. That's what David does here and that's what we must do also. No secondary causes.

And then verses 4 through 8, the verses of rejoicing (Psalm 60:4 & 5):

"4 Thou hast given a banner to those who fear You, That it may be displayed because of the truth. 5 That Your beloved may be delivered, Save with Your right hand, and answer us!"

A banner was a flag, a standard held high that rallied the troops. It gave courage and strength and fortitude to the troops to see the banner floating high in the wind. And the banner here is the banner of truth, a banner of the gospel, the banner of the promises of God, the banner of God's covenant. Whenever we remember God's promises and concentrate on them, we look at the banner. When we remember the gospel, when we share the gospel, we hold high the banner. Whenever we teach the Scriptures and believe it and memorize it, we lift high the banner and are strengthened by it. God has given us the banner of truth. Numbers 21:8, "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard, and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live.'"

The banner of truth is a banner of the gospel and God says, 'Look, look at My truth. Remember My promises. Remember My covenant promises in Deuteronomy 33. Remember them in Genesis 49: How I promised to be with you and to give you this land and to protect you. Remember I've given you David, a strong and godly leader who's organized the land and who's protecting you, and there are many godly people and prophets who will be representatives of mine to comfort you and strengthen you.'

And then, of course, the banner ultimately is seen as Jesus Christ. I'm reading from Isaiah the 11th chapter and the 10th verse. "Then it will come about in that day that the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the people; and his resting place will be glorious." You remember Jesus said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me"? Jesus is our banner. He's the One that encourages our hearts. Every time we sing about Him, every time we praise Him and worship Him and thank Him and trust Him we're looking at our banner, and it will build up our faith and strengthen us when the enemy rushes in like a flood. "When the enemy shall rush in like the flood, the Lord shall lift up a standard against him," says the prophet. That's what God has given us, a banner to encourage our hearts.

And then verses of pleading, verses of prayer (Psalm 60:6-8):

"6 God has spoken in His holiness: 'I will exult, I will portion out Shechem and measure out the valley of Succoth. 7 Gilead is Mine, and Manasseh is Mine; Ephraim also is the helmet of My head; Judah is My scepter. 8 Moab is My washbowl; Over Edom I shall throw My shoe; Shout loud, O Philistia, because of Me!'"

Now all the names of these places are somewhat confusing. Shechem is also Samaria and it represents a beautiful city in Mount Ephraim, and it's referred to as the head—from it soldiers will come. Gilead contains Bashan and other cities on the opposite or the eastern side of the Jordan. Judah and Manasseh and Ephraim, ten tribes all in the western side of the Jordan. Judah is the lawgiver: it is the seed of the government. Out of it rules David and from the tribe of Judah, of course, comes Christ the King who will forever be the King of the true Israel of God.

He speaks here of Moab as His washbowl. In Bible times people wore sandals. There were no paved roads. People walked in the dust and they received little bits of gravel in their feet. The first thing you did when you got to somebody's house, a servant, the lowliest of the servants, came out and crouched at your feet with a bowl of water and washed your feet. It was the lowliest job of the lowliest servant. That's the reason Jesus did it to His disciples. It was the lowest possible thing socially that you could do and He's saying, 'Moab, you've come in. You've attacked my soft underbelly but you will become My washbowl. You will be humbled and humiliated. Judah is my scepter. You've attacked it and you will

become a washbowl.

Over Edom I will throw my shoe.’ The picture here is of a military officer coming into a camp at night, taking off his sandals, and there are some lowly soldiers over there. And he throws his shoes over and says, “Hey kid, clean my boots.” It’s a way of humiliating someone, and putting them in their place, putting them down as low as you possibly can. And though Moab and Edom seem to be powerful now, they will be humiliated and broken. ‘Shout loud, O Philistia, because of Me. I will triumph over you too and I will make you shout in obedience and obeisance to Me.’ When David remembered the banner of God...when God’s people remembered His banner of His covenant of His promises, of His past deliverance, of His power, of His presence—they took faith. They remembered these covenant promises to them to give them these lands and to make them victorious and triumphant, and this gave them strength and courage.

And then verses of pleading prayer (Psalm 60:9-12):

“9Who will bring me into the besieged city? Who will lead me to Edom?”

The battle is not over yet. They were fighting in a place called the Valley of Salt. This is a place just beneath the bottom of the Dead Sea and it’s full of huge mountains, according to the commentary I read...mountains of crystallized salt with monstrous boulders of pure crystal salt from ages of evaporation there at the bottom of the Dead Sea. And the enemy, the Edomites and others, the Moabites, were attacking. The Edomites had an impregnable fortress known as Petra. You’ve seen pictures of it. Some of you have been there. I’ve never been to the Holy Land but I have seen the pictures, a huge valley that’s very narrow. It goes very deep in the earth and beautiful homes and temples are carved out of the side of the rock, and it’s just almost impossible to capture it. It’s so difficult to attack and so easy to defend. And so he’s crying out to God to help him. “Who will bring me into the besieged city? Who will lead me to Edom?” And too, of course, Petra would be the capital of Edom.

10Have not You Yourself, O God, rejected us? And will You not go forth with our armies, O God?”

‘Lord, we’ve done something or You never would have let the armies invade us in the first place, but we cry unto You anyway. We’re not exactly sure what we’re supposed to repent of but we cry unto You and open our hearts to You and beg You to help us and go with us.’

“10 Has not Thou Thyself, O God, rejected us? And wilt Thou not go forth with our armies, O God? 11 O give us help against the adversary, For deliverance by man is in vain. 12Through God we shall do valiantly, And it is He who will tread down our adversaries.”

Lord, even though we feel like You've rejected us, even though You've let this happen to us and we feel broken and humiliated and hurt and cut off from You, yet we still are Your people. We're still Yours, Lord—by covenant, we're Yours, and we've got to go and take Edom. We've got to go over and attack them. We've got to not only drive them out of our Southern Kingdom but we've got to go across the borders into their land and destroy them.

Just like George Bush is saying, 'Listen, the reason we are over there fighting in Afghanistan and fighting in Iraq is so we won't have to fight on Fifth Avenue in New York, and on Canal Street in New Orleans, and on the Embarcadero in San Francisco. That's why.' And so that's what David is saying, 'Lord, we've got to go and take the city. We've got to go and take Petra. Give us strength to. If You don't go with us we can't make it, but if You will go with us we will prevail. Oh, go with us. Accompany us and strengthen us, O God. "O give us help against the adversary, For deliverance by man is vain. Through God we shall do valiantly and it is He who will tread down our adversaries." 'Lord, You're the One and we beg Your help.'

Has the Lord let something come into your life? Do you feel like an unguarded part of your life has been invaded? Here's a preacher, let's say. He goes off to preach. He comes back, and he finds that his 17-year-old daughter is on drugs. While he's off preaching somewhere else, he came back and his daughter is on drugs. That's what David felt like. And if you have a problem with children like that you can cry out to the Lord with a cry like nothing else in this world. And David was crying for God to be with him. He felt vulnerable.

Deal directly with the Lord. Forget second causes. "My Father's way may twist and turn; my heart may throb and ache; but in my soul I'm glad I know He maketh no mistake. My cherished plans may go astray; my hopes may fade away; but still I'll trust my Lord to lead for He doth know the way. Though it be night and it may seem that day will never break, I'll pin my trust, my all in Him who maketh no mistake. There's so much more I cannot see; my eyesight's far too dim. So I'll simply trust and leave it all *to Him*, for by and by the mist will lift and plain it all He'll make. Through all the way, though dark to me, He made not one mistake."

*Lord, whatever You send in Your sovereign deliverance, we accept from Your sovereign hand. We'll deal with You, directly with You. We won't deal with second-causes. Whatever touches our lives comes from Your hand. The hairs of our heads are all numbered, and we deal with You. We cannot get our children through the maze that's broken down upon us, the corruptions of our times. We need You...and our nation needs You desperately. Our President needs You, for truly, O God, our own underbelly is soft and inviting to our adversaries who will blow us to smithereens if they can. May we pray?*

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