



MY FORTRESS--I shall never be shaken

by Tom Edwards

Psalm 62

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| (2) <i>My soul rests in God alone,
from whom comes my salvation.</i> | <i>but inwardly they curse. Selah</i> | (10) <i>Mortals are a mere breath,
the powerful but an illusion;
On a balance they rise;
together they are lighter than air.</i> |
| (3) <i>God alone is my rock and sal-
vation,
my secure height; I shall never
fall.</i> | (6) <i>My soul, be at rest in God
alone,
from whom comes my hope.</i> | (11) <i>Do not trust in extortion;
in plunder put no empty hope.
Though wealth increase,
do not set your heart upon it.</i> |
| (4) <i>How long will you set upon
people,
all of you beating them down,
As though they were a sagging
fence
or a battered wall?</i> | (7) <i>God alone is my rock and my
salvation,
my secure height; I shall not fall.</i> | (12) <i>One thing God has said;
two things I have heard:
Power belongs to God;</i> |
| (5) <i>Even from my place on high
they plot to dislodge me.
They delight in lies;
they bless with their mouths,</i> | (8) <i>My safety and glory are with
God,
my strong rock and refuge.</i> | (13) <i>so too, Lord, does kindness,
And you render to each of us
according to our deeds.</i> |
| | (9) <i>Trust God at all times, my peo-
ple!
Pour out your hearts to God our
refuge! Selah</i> | |

The Apostle Paul reminds us of this, "There will be terrifying times in the last days" (2 Tim. 3:1). Words like "terrorism, suicide missions, anthrax, weapons of mass destruction, sex scandals" have become part of our everyday mentality. Add to this the very real presence of disease, accidents, natural catastrophes, and enemies of every kind.

In the above Psalm, David paints a picture of his enemies crowding in on him like a tumultuous crowd. However, he refuses to submit to a fatalistic resignation. Rather he simply resigns everything to God. David is not exercising his own will power, but in the face of all foes he resolutely submits himself to the truth decreed by the God of his salvation.

As reflected in vs. 2, many viewed David as being "on the ropes", his situation is likened to a battered fence or wall ready to topple at any moment. The violence and pain of the circumstances are real, but in the midst of it David demands that his own soul remain silent and keep its abode in God. The titles "rock", "salvation", "fortress" all refer to God's sure strength, dependability, and protective care. David will not be moved from this "absolute truth", no injury devised by his enemies will be permanent.

For David, the issue was not whether or not he would pass through death--he knew that to be the destiny of all. Indeed death is an enemy, but is now a conquered foe which holds no "sting". Just as the Apostle Paul shares his take on death while writing from a prison cell, not knowing whether or not his earthly allotment has been fulfilled: "*My eager expectation and hope is that I shall not be put to shame in any way, but that with all boldness, now as always, Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or death. For to me life is Christ, and death is gain. If I go on living in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. And I do not know which I shall choose. I am caught between the two. I long to depart this life and be with Christ, for that is far better (Phil. 1:20-23).*"

No, David had never been afraid of enemies--not a bear, not a lion, not Goliath, not the giant of death. For David, death holds no terror. One's death is in the hands of God. For one of David's babies, it came at the age of seven days. For his son Absalom, it came in the prime of life. For Jesus it came at the age of 33. For Paul it proceeded old age. For David it would come when he was bedridden and feeble.



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In vs. 6-8 we hear David trumpeting the sure victory which is found in God alone. David refuses to put any stock in anything that would be of "self". He will not defend his own honor nor claim any strength found in his own flesh or intellect. He fully realizes that his "hope" is the "hope" that comes from God, therefore it cannot fail.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran pastor and theologian, who was imprisoned by the Nazis and then just days before his prison was liberated, he was hanged. Bonhoeffer is one of our great 20th century persons of faith. He wrote: "Faith means the finding and holding fast of this foundation [the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ]. It means casting anchor upon it and being held fast by it. Faith means founding my life upon a foundation which is outside myself, upon an eternal and holy foundation, upon Christ."

We might ask, "Do people in our day really need to learn the lesson which David teaches in this psalm? What is it that people trust in?" Several years ago, a popular magazine, The Ladies Home Journal (1981) asked, "In whom do you trust?" Responses were: Walter Cronkite 40% of the vote, Pope John Paul 26%, Billy Graham 6%, God 3%. Things must not have been much different in David's day. In vs. 8, David cries out for the people of the believing community to trust in God. They need not be spiritually and mentally shackled by fear and worry. Rather they must cast themselves upon the Lord from whom comes their help. They must pour out to God that which lies heavily upon their hearts and know that He is able to protect them.

In verse 9-10, David reminds us of the danger of trusting in anything earthly. Everything that is bound to this earth carries with it the germ of ruin. Outward appearance, men of low estate or high, must not govern our thought and action. We must overcome the temptation to rely on prosperity lest we be seized with envy and covetousness of worldly goods. Not only must we avoid the danger of exalting those who attain to wealth by wicked means, even wealth gained lawfully must not become a master of the heart---"*Tell the rich in the present age not to be proud and not to rely on so uncertain a thing as wealth but rather on God, who richly provides us with all things for our enjoyment. Tell them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share, thus accumulating as treasure a good foundation for the future, so as to win the life that is true life* (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

David concludes his psalm with two divine utterances:-----
THE FIRST GREAT TRUTH: God has power over everything, consequently nothing takes place without Him, and whatever is opposed to Him must sooner or later succumb.
THE SECOND GREAT TRUTH: That God is a God of unlimited mercy and love. This mercy and love are according to his omnipotent power and will be bestowed liberally upon those who continue in faithfulness to Him and place their hope in Him.

Yes, we live in perilous times, and many are the righteous who suffer in ways which seem to us now inexplicable. Immediately after the last supper, Jesus gave his disciples dire warnings about the suffering which was at hand for Himself, then subsequently for them. For good reason their hearts became heavy and worry descended upon them like the blackness of the night. It was then that they heard these words that came from the master's lips: "*Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be* (John 14:1-3).

The words of Jesus are a "worry buster". Worry can be a destructive force. Someone once said: "*Worry is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained.*" The words of Jesus, like the words of David beckon us back from the abyss of fear and despair. They speak to us about a hiding place to which we can flee---a high tower, a sanctuary, a refuge. Moses once stood upon a frightening mountain where lightning flashed, the wind roared, and the earth shook. Moses cried out that he might experience the face of God in that terrifying place. So, God hid him in the cleft of the rock. As God passed by, Moses caught a glimpse of the glory of God and he was never the same again. Similarly, the Apostle Paul says: "for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory (Col. 3:3-4)." It means when we give up on reliance in "self", we can find our cleft in the rock (Jesus), and there we will find shelter in the power and mercy of the Most High God.

The foe appears in many ways. Some are facing, even at this present moment, the roar of a ravenous enemy. Along with David we are called to resign ourselves to the care of the one who cares for us---to find in him our refuge:

***For God alone my soul waits in silence;
from him comes my salvation.***

***He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall never be shaken.***

"Worry is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained."

Interested in Scheduling a Parish Mission?
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www.catholicevangelization.homestead.com



Praying with the elderly in Ostrava

Our small team spent most of the month of April in the Czech Republic presenting parish missions, as well as speaking at conferences and sharing with students at both high school and university level. The major city of Pilsen is renowned for its brewing industry and university. However it could be counted amongst the most unbelieving centers in the world. A recent survey revealed that less than .03 percent of the population profess Christianity.

Nevertheless, our Discipleship School which was presented at the Dominican Church was attended by 85 people each night--people hungry to know and grow. One elderly lady made her way home from the meeting by catching a train at 10:00 PM which took her to another train. Then upon leaving the train she walked 3 kilometers through the forest to reach home. That's a commitment.

*Renewal Ministries
Mission to
Czech Republic, April, 2008*



Sharing with high school English students in Ostrava



Team member, Mary Shaw teaches Discipleship School at Dominican Church in Pilsen, Czech Republic

Thirty-four years of full-time lay Catholic evangelization and mission. One day at a time and only because the Lord continues to use people like you to sustain it all. Your response in prayer and support is appreciated and needed at this time.

*Tom Edwards Evangelistic Assoc., Inc.
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Itinerary

Your Prayers Please

Twelve people will make up our team to Tanzania in June. Our venues will include retreats for priests, for sisters, daily workshops and large rallies. Please pray for every aspect of the ministry and our travel.

The July trip to China still contains many unknown factors. Please pray the the Lord's will may be accomplished, for safety, and for the many who are yet awaiting to hear Good News.

Each Wednesday Evening--7:00 PM--Joyful Family Prayer G.--St. Augustine FL--St. Augustine House of Prayer and Evangelization Center (34 Ocean Ave.)--all are welcome.

May 30-June 1---Ann Arbor, MI---Renewal Ministries Gathering

June 5-13---Tanzania---Dodoma

June 14-21--Tanzania---Morogoro

July 1-8---China, Hong Kong

July 9-15--China, Beijing

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