



**The Danger of Making Decisions On Our Own  
Under Stress, Pray, Nothing Going On, Pray  
Psalm 56**

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You think you're having a bad day and then one million Chinese "volunteers" cross the border and make it a whole lot worse. At least that would be the way some folks would look at the situation. The commander of the 1st Marines, Col Chesty Puller reflected the same attitude we see being reflected by David here in Psalm 56.

When that took place. When told that he was surrounded and outnumbered 29 to 1 he said the following:



“All right, they’re on our left, they’re on our right, they’re in front of us, they’re behind us...they can’t get away this time.” Col Chesty Puller’s comment at Chosin Reservoir.

Psalm 56:title–13

“For the music director; **according to Jonath elem rehokim. A Mikhtam of David, when the Philistines seized him in Gath.** Be gracious to me, God, for a man has trampled upon me; Fighting all day long he oppresses me. **My enemies have trampled upon me all day long, For they are many who fight proudly against me. When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You.** In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. **What can mere mortals do to me? All day long they distort my words; All their thoughts are against me for evil. They attack, they lurk, They watch my steps, As they have waited to take my life. Because of their wickedness, will there be an escape for them?** In anger make the peoples fall down, God! You have taken account of my miseries; Put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book? Then my enemies will turn back on the day when I call; **This I know, that God is for me. In God, whose word I praise, In the LORD, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can mankind do to me?** Your vows are binding upon me, God; I will render thanksgiving offerings to You. For You have saved my soul from death, Indeed my feet from stumbling, So that I may walk before God In the light of the living.” (NASB 2020)

Psalm 56 is the first of five Mikhtam psalms. The word “literally means “engraved” or “permanent.” This word pictures that which is unmoveable, steadfast, stable and enduring.” (McGee 1997, 771)

While David was on the run from Saul, there were those times he prayed and the Lord led him, and then there were those times he reacted to circumstances, did not pray and made decisions in the flesh, just like we do from time to time. This psalm came from one of those times that we would look on and say to ourselves, “David, what were you thinking.”

Remember when he was a young man and there was this problem by the name of Goliath. David, in faith, told King Saul, I can take care of this problem for you, and with one smooth round stone, he does. He kills Goliath, who is from Gath, and leads the nation to a routing of the Philistine army, predominately from Gath.

As a military leader for King Saul, David went on to fight the Philistines and do so with great success not only obtaining the dowry for his wife Michel from 200 dead Philistines (1 Samuel 18:27), but he killed, per the local press, tens of thousands (1 Samuel 18:7) of their number.

Fast forward a few years and now Saul has made it clear he wants David dead. David and some who are loyal to him run, first stopping at Nob where the Tabernacle is at the time. That is where he asks for food, leads the priests to believe he is on an important mission for the King, and fetches the weapons he left there. The ones he took from a dead Goliath years earlier.

Let me read you the text that will make you wonder, what was David thinking. And yes, he did not pray about this at all.

1 Samuel 21:8–10

“David said to Ahimelech, “Now is there no spear or sword on hand? For I brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king’s matter was urgent.” Then the priest said, “**The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, behold, it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod; if you would take it for yourself, take it. For there is no other except it here.**” And David said, “**There is none like it; give it to me.**” Then David set out and fled that day from Saul, and went to Achish king of Gath.” (NASB 2020)



But the soldiers there at Gath did not quite see it the way David did; they considered David their prisoner, because, well Goliath and others.

David is a fugitive, but no one knows about that yet. They sure do not know about it in Gath. What he does in his extreme stress is a picture of what the nation of Israel will do during the Tribulation. They will trust someone who wants them dead. David went and did the same. I understand why Keil and Delitzsch call this psalm one which reflects the “Cheerful Courage of a Fugitive.” (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 388)

Unfortunately, what David does by reacting to his circumstances rather than acting on them and seeking the Lord up front, is no different than many of us do from time to time.

Our reaction to the unknown or sudden stressor that shows up in our life is simple. Prayer. “The benefit of knowing that God is in charge is peace of mind. When we get up from prayer knowing that his “is the kingdom”—that he is in charge of the world, and of my life in it—we can have peace of mind as we go about our day.” (Ray 2008, 152)

David is not there yet. Yes, what David does makes no sense at all and when, after he shows up and is captured, he overhears the following, well, we get this psalm.

1 Samuel 21:11–12

“But the servants of Achish said to him, “Is this not David, the king of the land? Did they not sing of this one as they danced, saying, ‘Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands?’” David took these words to heart and greatly feared Achish king of Gath.” (NASB 2020)

Now he gets it, he is surrounded, totally and completely by those who just yesterday, he was hunting down on behalf of King Saul. He placed himself into this situation by not relying on the Lord, and now he must rely on the Lord to get him out of a predicament he created.

Been there, done that, and I have multiple t-shirts as a result. We see this psalm as a result.

Psalm 56:title

“For the music director; according to **Jonath elem rehokim**. A Mikhtam of David, when the Philistines seized him in Gath.” (NASB 2020)

David’s choice of the music he wants to use with this psalm reflects where his heart wanted to be, quietly far away. The term means, from the NASB notes, “The silent dove of those who are far off; or The dove of the distant terebinths”

David has created a serious mess for himself. It is not the first time, and it will not be the last. Sin does that and every time we step out on our own thinking this is too small for God, or I am too busy for God, we open ourselves up for this. Note his first words.

Psalm 56:1–2

“Be gracious to me, God, for a man has trampled upon me; Fighting all day long he oppresses me. My enemies have trampled upon me all day long, For they are many who fight proudly against me.” (NASB 2020)

David has placed himself into a situation that he is totally incapable of extricating himself from. Only God can save him from his poor decision making and the consequences of it. Yes, Satan does indeed use stress to mislead and draw us away from the Lord.



The only way we can deal with stress is with Jesus Christ, first by believing in Him. Without believing in Him we are on our own, and success in coping with stress is almost impossible. Second, we need to trust Him and obey Him. We should trust Him to do what is right because His ways are always best for us. Disobedience and sin can produce stress and cut us off from the only means of peace and joy. (Got Questions Ministries 2002-2013)

David knows that now and reflects his turning, right up front, back to relying and leaning on the grace of God. He needs God's unmerited favor, he needs God's mercy.

David realizes though that those who are standing against him are mere men who are now holding him.

The text says that these mere men have trampled, the word is  $\text{סָפַח}$  (sapa) him. The word means "to gasp: for air, to pant, to long for, to be a nuisance, pester, to strive, press on." (Koehler, et al. 1994-2000, 1375)

The word choice by David leads us to understand this has been going on for awhile and now he is in their clutches. They are lusting after to do something to him. "Pester, Chase, Treat with Hostility. Such panting and gasping also describes the effort and wrath of the enemy who unceasingly and with all his energy pursues someone else in order to "snap him up," or the greediness driving the stronger person to grab the possessions of the weaker." (Maiberger 2004, 269)

They are further described as "foemen"—men who make war on the one whom they antagonize. They keep crowding in on their victim continually. All of them are marked by pride in their attitude. (Leupold 1959, 427)

Based on that word choice, this is a people who have constantly been on the offensive against David for years. Many have died at his hands and now that he is there in Gath, they are not letting up on him. I suspect he is not in a cell waiting, I suspect he is being constantly harassed by them, possibly beaten by him. Yes, he is indeed fearful over the situation he has placed himself in and only God can get him out. He does have an expectation though that the Lord will indeed show up on his behalf. He is going through a very real trial beginning first with Saul, and now in Gath with the Philistines.

This is not an unusual thing either when we are stressing out over something. The number of times I have been involved in the arrest of someone who only committed the crime because they could not figure out any other way out of their self-made situation is rather sizeable. As a follower of Jesus, when we run up against the stress that we are not used to, pause, and seek the Lord.

I don't have time to pray right now, I need to act. Ask the Lord for wisdom and direction and then go on. Nehemiah had been praying over the walls of Jerusalem for some time and it affected his outward appearance and the King noticed.

That is possible death penalty time there in the Persian Empire. I suspect Nehemiah asked the Lord for help in his mind at that exact moment and then went forward trusting that the Lord would honor His promises to him. He will do the same for us as well.

Trials do not phone you the day before they show up. We had a Cat 4 hurricane pointed right at the base I was at and we were 9 feet above sea level expecting a 20-foot storm surge. I prayed, and then asked to see the General. At first he was not wanting to evacuate the base, but when I showed him the water mark from a similar storm in the 1920's, he decided he needed to move quickly.



None of us panicked, not at all. After the shock of finding out we were in the eye, or would be shortly, it was time to take action. But prayer did indeed pave the way and prevented us all from running around like a bunch of chickens with their heads cut off.

By the way, that is where Satan wants us to go. Trials are meant to grow us and teach us to rely on the Lord and His provision.

David is now learning that.

James 1:2–4

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” (ESV)

But it still isn't fun when you are still in the middle of it and James does not help us out with what he says either. He does not say if you have trials, he uses the word, when. “We are not to retreat in trials or be taken by surprise by trials or overtaken by trials, but we are to stand strong in the faith and honor the Lord Jesus in every trial. We are not to cry about trials in our lives, but we are to be courageous in trials of life. We do not know when trials will come, but only the fact that they will come.” (Andrews 2017, 25)

Our approach to a trial, even we are the cause of it, is to seek the Lord. As we seek Him, we lean into His promises and His mercy and His grace, just as David is doing here.

Psalms 56:3–4

“When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?” (NASB 2020)

David was afraid? The word is *yarāy* and is used many times in connection with the fear of God, but here it is used of fear. “Other examples give more emphasis to the anticipation of evil without necessarily pointing to the emotional reaction. David's recognition while in Achish's court that his reputation was a danger to him (1 Sam 21:13) is an example.” (Bowling 1999, 399-400)

David's reaction to his fear is where all who are believers should go, we turn to and trust the Lord. One of the most common things we as mortal humans do, is fear. Notice the charge Moses makes to Joshua as he promotes and ordains him as the leader for Israel.

Deuteronomy 31:7–8

“Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, **“Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land that the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall put them in possession of it. It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.”**” (ESV)

David is trusting in the Lord but at the same time, he has a healthy fear of what he placed himself into.

1 Samuel 21:12

“And **David took these words to heart and was much afraid of Achish** the king of Gath.” (ESV)

David is doing speed prayer, disaster prayer, help now prayer, you name it, he is praying it and the Lord provides David wisdom to do something that leans into the superstitions of the Philistines. David feigned insanity.



1 Samuel 21:13–15

“So he changed his behavior before them and pretended to be insane in their hands and made marks on the doors of the gate and let his spittle run down his beard. Then Achish said to his servants, “Behold, you see the man is mad. Why then have you brought him to me? Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this fellow to behave as a madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?” (ESV)

In the ancient Near East, this type of insanity was considered to be the result of divine possession or affliction. Consequently, Achish did not regard David as a threat, and David was allowed to leave Gath. (Andrews and Bergen 2009, 157)

The Lord led David to do this, and He used this performance from David to have him set free. This episode and this psalm resulting from it are some of the reasons why I love the honesty of the Bible. We don't just get the approved press clippings; we also get the dirt.

It is noteworthy that the Bible shows no record of David's praying during his flight from Nob to Gath. No wonder he fell into such error! His disgrace, however, seems to have jarred him to his senses; David's fleshly strategies having only led him from the fire into the pot, he was now ready to turn again to the Lord. David had lost hold of God and fallen into folly, but God had not let go of him. Having escaped, David in Psalm 56 turns back to the Lord in prayer. (Phillips 2019, 144)

David is in the process of moving and showing us as well, from fear to faith. We all need to see this and learn from this since all of us will, at one time or another, experience fear. What was David's first step?

He focused on the character of God to remove his eyes off His predicament. The more we consider the enemy standing in front of us wanting to take us down, the more we grow in fear and our faith begins to slip away. We begin to feel lonely, like we are in this all by ourselves. We aren't, we never have been, but that is where Satan wants to take us. The lonelier we get, the more fear we experience and the goal is to freeze us into inaction.

David began with the grace of God, His character that He expresses towards those who fear Him and follow Him.

Philippians 4:6–7

**“Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand.** His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.” (NLT)

Isaiah 41:10

**“Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God.** I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.” (NLT)

John 14:27

**“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.** Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” (ESV)

David did indeed fear, but as he took his eyes off of his situation and looked at it through the eyes of the Lord, his fear turned to faith in the Lord to take care of him. He did have to take action though, on what the Lord revealed to him, he needed to do, no matter how personally embarrassing it would be. As he looks to the Lord, he realizes that men have no power beyond that which the Lord gives them. God is with him.



When we let fear overwhelm us, we go to Gath. Why do people commit fraud? Fear that the losses might make investors pull out. Why do young women consider abortion? Because the lies that our culture has placed into their heads designed to create fear. First is the lie of free sex, followed by the lie of it's your body after all.

It is amazing the things you can do if you are fearless. I am not talking about being reckless, but fearless. Doing what needs to be done no matter the consequences. That is what happens to young people when they go through basic military training. They start off as individuals but then learn that together, there are things they could do that they could not do individually.

I can't get over that wall turns into I can since I know that those who are with me will help if need be. Because you will do the same if someone needs it. But now, as followers of Jesus we are equipped beyond our wildest dreams.

Matthew 28:20b

**"...I am with you always, to the end of the age."** (NASB 2020)

Before we knew about Jesus, some of us were fearful of the future, we were fearful of death. That fear, even though we did not know it at the time, was because all we were looking forward to was judgment. Then we met Jesus. Now there is not fear because of Jesus Christ.

Psalms 56:4–6

**"In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? All day long they distort my words; All their thoughts are against me for evil. They attack, they lurk, They watch my steps, As they have waited to take my life."** (NASB 2020)

David knew where to place his trust, we do too.

For those of us who are waiting on the Lord, hang in there, He will indeed act in accordance with His word...He always does. But contrary to prosperity gospel types, He will not act in accordance with your words, or with your desires. There is no name it claim it in the Bible.

You cannot twist 3 John 2 to say we will prosper and be healthy.

3 John 2

**"Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers."** (NASB 2020)

John was a good friend of Gaius and wanted him, just as we do for our friends, to do well in every area of his life, physically and spiritually. When John says he was praying for Gaius to prosper he is not talking only about about money or financial prosperity.

The word prosper is εὐδοῦσθαι (euodousthai) and means "to open the road, to make have a good journey, guide well...to grant success, make prosper...to have a good journey...to go well, have success." (Montanari 2015)

"To extend John's wish for Gaius to refer to financial and material prosperity for all Christians for all times is totally foreign to the text. But to argue from the text that God wills our financial prosperity is to abuse the text, not use it." (Fee 2006, 10) It is eisegesis when used that way, a pretext relying on a proof text for support of something totally foreign to the text.



David had the Philistines who wanted him dead, but Saul and those allied with him, wanted him dead as well.

So, until then, gaslight David. That is what distorting his words means. It is a method of lying about someone. It is a manipulative tactic being used from a distance designed to make the one being gaslit to doubt their memories, perception or sanity. When this is done in mass media, the intent is to change the perception of what the truth actually is by replacing it with a lie and then dwelling on the lie until it becomes more truthful than the truth. Welcome to propaganda.

And then, when the time is ripe and the subject of attack has been rendered friendless, destroy them. Welcome to the cancel culture of 2026.

Psalm 56:6–7

**“They attack, they lurk, They watch my steps, As they have waited to take my life.** Because of their wickedness, will there be an escape for them? In anger make the peoples fall down, God!” (NASB 2020)

“As hunters chase their quarry and carefully follow their tracks (Lam. 4:19), so the enemies lie in wait for every step their prey takes. They want to kill him. Worth noting is the use of the term (translated waited) *qaweh*, (qaweh) which has the meaning “to aim at.” In view of these threats, the petitioner calls to Yahweh as the judge (v. 7). Since the wicked deeds of the enemies in this connection are called *awen*, (awen wickedness) we may perhaps think of magic manipulations with curses and imprecations the enemies pursue their prey. But the God who is enthroned on Zion is the judge of the nations.” (Kraus 1993, 526)

Is David talking about the people of Gath, yes. But he also talking here about those who are pursuing him resulting in him being here in the first place. This is a tactic of Satan that hasn't changed, yes there are those who will even go as far as leaning into the occult and using curses to stop those who are serving the Lord. That is all a bluff though.

1 John 4:4

**“You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”** (NASB 2020)

Christians are assured of victory over false prophets and heretics (theological victory—they have not succeeded in deceiving you; you know the truth and have rejected their lies). Why? How? Because “greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world!” (Storms 2006)

The victory achieved by Jesus Christ over the enemy at the cross was total.

Many of us in the west though never bother to recognize that or even realize that spiritual warfare is going on. Again, the imperative for us to have a Biblical worldview. That worldview, which includes the supernatural, reveals to us “physical phenomena/nature are controlled by God; angels do his bidding; demons actively and energetically oppose his kingdom; miracles, physical healing, gifts of the HS are essential elements that constitute reality.” (Storms 2006)

But many of our brothers and sisters today live as if the Lord, or any other spiritual being, faithful or not, are not applicable to them in their life.

Psalm 56:8–9

**“You have taken account of my miseries; Put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book?** Then my enemies will turn back on the day when I call; This I know, that God is for me.” (NASB 2020)



When David expresses the truth that God is watching and making note, he uses the word סָפַרְתָּהּ (saparta). This means “to count, write, to relate, to measure, to count (up), to measure off, to enumerate in writing, make a written record, to count out something.” (Koehler, et al. 1994-2000, 765)

When you and I go through trials, and find ourselves discouraged and looking to the Lord, He tells us that He keeps a record of that. He will not forget what it is we went through and remained faithful in. As a means of tracking, he also asks that his tears of sorrow be stored as well. David is asking and relying on the Lord to maintain a permanent record of what he is going through as well as those who are behind it. David is trusting that the Lord retain and keep the evidence in His book. Because of his faith in the Lord maintaining a record, he makes a statement of faith.

Psalm 56:9

“Then my enemies will turn back on the day when I call; This I know, that God is for me.” (NASB 2020)

David knows that the Lord is hearing his prayers and has the evidence trail to go along with what he is praying about. As a result, he knows that the day is coming when those who are his enemies, those who are attacking and are the source of the stress and the trial, will have to retreat. “A day will come when his prayer, which is even now heard, will be also outwardly fulfilled, and the full realization of the succour will coincide with the cry for help.” (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 391)

We need to remember that, God is for you and me.

Romans 8:31–32

**“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”** (ESV)

As we do life and come to the place where we really do understand what David is saying here and what Paul is saying, what God is telling us, it should impact how we live. God, the creator of everything, He is with each of us as His followers. He is indeed for us. As we grasp that fact, it impacts us.

When we understand that God is for us, then each of us can do great and powerful exploits on behalf of the Lord. As part of His final words to His disciples, Jesus emphasized this to a group of men who would indeed turn the world upside down. We have that power in each of us right now.

John 14:12–18

**“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”** (ESV)

This is a promise made by Jesus to the one, that's you and me, who believes in Him. He uses a comparative, that we are to take a look at the totality of everything that He has done while here on earth.

Do you have that picture in mind now? Good. I mean He taught a few thousand, He healed some, cast demons out of some, even raised a few from the dead too. And we know the text is not exhaustive as to everything He did. So, considering everything we have a record of, are you ready for this? Believer, you and I will not only be empowered to do those works, but even greater works.



And empowering enablement to do this? Yes indeed. God is so for us we struggle to fully understand it.

When we pray in Jesus' name we claim to be acting for Him. Someone who prays that way will always ask only what is God's will, or what is subject to God's will, since that is always how Jesus related to His Father. It is impossible to truly pray "in Jesus' name" and ask for something contrary to God's will. (Constable 2003, Jn 14:13)

He does not tell us to ask and feed our lusts, He tells us to pray in alignment with the Holy Spirit and then stand back and see what the Lord can do. Because God is for us.

Psalm 56:10–11

"In God, whose word I praise, In the LORD, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can mankind do to me?" (NASB 2020)

David is already moving towards thanksgiving. He has attached his heart to reality, the sure word of God. God's word will never fail. God's word is our sword (Ephesians 6:17) and it is living.

Hebrews 4:12–13

"For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable." (NLT)

The word is alive because of the Holy Spirit speaking to us and to those who hear the word. His word is sharper than any sword ever made as it can cut away even the strongest objections and leave the one hearing the word guilty for all eternity or transferred to the Kingdom of Light for all eternity. F. F. Bruce says the following.

We may conceal our inner being from our neighbors, and we can even deceive ourselves; but nothing escapes the scrutiny of God; before him everything lies exposed and powerless. And it is to him, not to our fellow-men or to our own conscience, that our final account must be rendered. Stripped of all disguise and protection, we are utterly at the mercy of God, the Judge of all. (Bruce 1990, 114)

This is where David lays his praise because he knows the power of God's word.

The enemy hasn't changed. His goal is to have us fear what might happen if we live in the light of God's word fully realizing that if God is for me, who can be against me? The answer is, of course, no one. Satan wants us to forget that and retreat to fear because someone might not like what we say about the Lord. Having worked in Christian radio, realizing that a minimum of 10,000 people were listening in at any given time, that is something you have to get over rather quickly. I was there in obedience to what the Lord wanted me to do at that time. It wasn't to make a name for myself.

Will people disagree when you share Christ with them? Probably.

Will they ask you to quit talking about the Lord all the time if they are family or friends? They might but that is like telling someone not to breathe as your breathing bothers me. I still remember the condescending looks I received from some after I came to Christ. I also remember how some who were friends, were no longer friends.

That does indeed happen when you come to Christ. David was faithful to the Lord, and he not only lost many friendships over it, but some who he loved were killed as a result.



But at the personal level, he was in the process of becoming fearless. Yes, he had already killed Goliath and many more by this time. But following the Lord and feigning madness did indeed result in him being set free. And what David learned was when he placed his trust in God, there was no reason to fear. Literally, since he knew who he was in the Lord, what could any mortal man do to him that would change who he was in the Lord. What can any person do to us that would change who we are in Christ?

Charles Spurgeon sums up what David is expressing here. "He views his foes in their most forcible character, calling them not flesh, but indicating them as man, yet he dreads them not; though the whole race were his enemies he would not be afraid now that his trust is stayed on God. He is not afraid of what they threaten to do, for much of that they cannot do; and even what is in their power, what they can do, he defies with holy daring. He speaks for the future, "I will not," for he is sure that the security of the present will suffice for days to come." (Spurgeon n.d., 467)

Psalm 56:12–13

**"Your vows are binding upon me, God; I will render thanksgiving offerings to You. For You have saved my soul from death, Indeed my feet from stumbling, So that I may walk before God In the light of the living."** (NASB 2020)

We are not told what type or kind of vows David may have made while he was going through this. He does not intend to forget them.

There are those today who make vows when they get in trouble, and most then forget them once they are no longer in trouble.

We routinely see wedding vows being tossed aside all the time.

Lord get me out of this, and I will serve you forever. And two weeks later they don't remember saying that. I have heard people make vows while praying. Lord, if you will take of this financial hole I dug for myself, then I will do this for you. Then they don't.

If you make a vow to God, be serious about it. Most wedding vows are done before the Lord. Per the law, vows are serious promises, David knew this.

Deuteronomy 23:21–23

"When you make a vow to the LORD your God you must not delay in fulfilling it, for otherwise he will surely hold you accountable as a sinner. If you refrain from making a vow, it will not be sinful. Whatever you vow, you must be careful to do what you have promised, such as what you have vowed to the LORD your God as a freewill offering." (NET 2nd ed.)

Jesus also taught on vows, in Matthew 5:33, He first summed up what the Old Testament teachings were on vows. It was a promise whether to God or another person and there was an expectation from the Lord that it would be kept. But Jesus said don't make any vows.

Matthew 5:34–37

"But I say to you, do not take oaths at all—not by heaven, because it is the throne of God, not by earth, because it is his footstool, and not by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great King. Do not take an oath by your head, because you are not able to make one hair white or black. Let your word be 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no.' More than this is from the evil one." (NET 2nd ed.)

He is talking to a problem that had been created within the religious establishment. "The religious leaders had designed an elaborate system indicating how binding a vow was depending on how the vow had been made. The leaders said that if they swore by heaven or by the earth or by Jerusalem, they could get



out of their vow without penalty because they did not make the vow in God's name. Jesus explained that a vow is a vow. A promise is binding before God, no matter what words are used." (Barton, et al. 2001, 28)

As followers of Jesus Christ, we should be well known for our honesty, truthfulness and fair dealing in business and life. Vows, per Jesus, shouldn't be necessary because of the Holy Spirit working in and through each of us.

Do Christians make promises and renege on them? Yes, they do. I have been subjected to this multiple times in multiple churches. We are indeed all sinners saved by grace, but when you promise something and then the time comes to perform, and instead you say, "I have prayed about this and the Lord says no." Really, why did you promise that in the first place, not only once but on multiple occasions? When you confront that, pray for the one who is promising and not following through on their promise to you.

Colossians 3:9–11

**"Do not lie to one another since you have put off the old man with its practices and have been clothed with the new man that is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created it.** Here there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and in all." (NET 2nd ed.)

For David, still under the law, he made vows and he followed through on them. As he wraps up this prayer, he is worshiping the Lord as he has learned to fully trust the Lord now. The fear has been replaced with faith.

This is what David did, resolving to "walk before God in the light of life" (Ps. 56:13). Can you rejoice with David that Christ has "delivered my soul from death" and has kept "my feet from falling"? If this is your testimony, then your resolution should also be the same as David's. He had just emerged from one of the lowest episodes in his entire life, governed by folly and fear. But turning back to God through his Word, David entered a new phase of his life that was characterized by godliness and achievement. (Phillips 2019, 151)

John 8:12

"Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. **Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.**" (ESV)

For the follower of Jesus Christ, we can indeed have victory over fear. Walking in fear is walking in darkness, Jesus has told us that as we follow Him, we are in the light. Let His light shine in and through all that we do everyday. Say no to fear and yes to faith and trust in Christ.

Let's pray.

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