

# Psalm 56



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<sup>1</sup> *ESV* Psalm 56:1 *To the choirmaster: according to The Dove on Far-off Terebinths. A Miktam of David, when the Philistines seized him in Gath.* Be gracious to me, O God, for man tramples on me; all day long an attacker oppresses me;  
<sup>2</sup> my enemies trample on me all day long, for many attack me proudly.  
<sup>3</sup> When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.  
<sup>4</sup> In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?  
<sup>5</sup> All day long they injure my cause; all their thoughts are against me for evil.  
<sup>6</sup> They stir up strife, they lurk; they watch my steps, as they have waited for my life.  
<sup>7</sup> For their crime will they escape? In wrath cast down the peoples, O God!  
<sup>8</sup> You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?  
<sup>9</sup> Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call. This I know, that God is for me.  
<sup>10</sup> In God, whose word I praise, in the LORD, whose word I praise,  
<sup>11</sup> in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?  
<sup>12</sup> I must perform my vows to you, O God; I will render thank offerings to you.  
<sup>13</sup> For you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of life.

## Psalm 56 - STUDY QUESTIONS

### Could life get any worse?

<sup>1</sup> *ESV* **Psalm 56:1** *To the choirmaster: according to The Dove on Far-off Terebinths. A Miktam of David, when the Philistines seized him in Gath.*

I know it's easy to overlook the "intro" part of the Psalms, but they often are very insightful. This was written by David while he was basically a prisoner of his gravest enemies? This is the FUTURE KING being held by his despised enemies. How would you feel if your life had gotten so bad that you had to FLEE to your ENEMIES? (<sup>1</sup> *ESV* **1 Samuel 21:10** *And David rose and fled that day from Saul and went to Achish the king of Gath.*) What would you want to ask God about now?

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### Others are sinning against me

Be gracious to me, O God, for man tramples on me; all day long an attacker oppresses me; <sup>2</sup> my enemies trample on me all day long, for many attack me proudly.

David hasn't been wronged by someone, he feels he's BEING wronged constantly by many. If you look at the words he chooses, it sounds like they are VERY harsh ALL the time and are even PROUD of it. Why do you think David is turning to God?

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### **NO reason for fear**

<sup>3</sup> When I am afraid, **I put my trust in you.** <sup>4</sup> In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. **What can flesh do to me?**

I think we should note that David DOES have fear. WHEN I am afraid. However, he is not content to remain in fear or justify it. He responds in Trust to God. I think 2 things are worthy of a question.

**FIRST:** David says that WHEN he is afraid he WILFULLY, INTENTIONALLY **PUTS** his trust in God. Why do you think he does this? HOW do you think he does this?

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**SECOND:** David says he won't be afraid because "what can people do to me?". So let's answer this. Practically in every day life what can people do to you?

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BUT ... theologically, what can people REALLY do to you? (HINT: is God Sovereign?)

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### **Leave it to God**

<sup>5</sup> All day long they injure my cause; all their thoughts are against me for evil. <sup>6</sup> They stir up strife, they lurk; they watch my steps, as they have waited for my life. <sup>7</sup> **For their crime will they escape? In wrath cast down the peoples, O God!**

I know if we're not careful we can read this portion and only see the horrible things, and then David's hope and prayer for God to really NAIL them. However, I want to emphasize the GOD part of this properly. David was a man of war, with a FEROCIOUS band of soldiers, all of whom are trained killers. If that was your situation would you just go wipe them all out ... OR ... would you leave it in God's hands? Do you see my point? David had means and reason to do harm to these enemies, but he instead

pleads for God to deal with them. What is the “enemy” you are facing today, this week. In what ways are you tempted to take action AGAINST them? How can you improve on trusting God to deal with them?

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### God really cares about every tear

<sup>8</sup> You have **kept count** of my tossings; put my **tears in your bottle**. Are they not **in your book**?

One theme we see in Scripture and in the Psalms in particular is the intimate awareness and care God has for us as His children. This states that he has kept meticulous records of his “tossings” or his “wanderings” or more specifically ... his SUFFERING. He parallels that by stating that God even in a sense keeps our tears in His bottle and has a written record of our hurts. What do these mean to you as you suffer?

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### God is FOR you

<sup>9</sup> **Then my enemies will turn back** in the day when I call. **This I know, that God is for me.** <sup>10</sup> In God, whose word I praise, in the LORD, whose word I praise, <sup>11</sup> in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?

There are many things we could take from this section, but I think the greatest is the fact that David is RE stating that HE TRUSTS and that MAN CAN DO NOTHING to him. However, this verse gives new information in that trust. I KNOW THAT GOD IS FOR ME. I think in this context he is sure GOD WILL work for him and on his behalf. How can you trust in God when He has not yet come to the rescue? How long do you give God to work before you doubt Him?

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### Keep doing right even when others aren't

<sup>12</sup> **I must perform my vows** to you, O God; **I will render thank offerings** to you.

Remember, David has NOT been rescued or vindicated yet. But he is committed to doing what is right. To worshipping. To THANKING God IN the suffering.

How do you worship IN suffering. Explain what that looks like?

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How do you truly THANK God IN suffering. Explain what that looks like?

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### God is protecting us even in our hardest days

<sup>13</sup> For you have delivered **my soul from death**, yes, my **feet from falling**, that I may **walk before God in the light** of life. (Ps. 56:1 ESV)

Be careful ... again ... it may sound like everything has worked out if you don't read this carefully. He is STILL a captive of his enemies and he is still running for his life, and he is still in all kinds of trouble. BUT ... he is confident in God AND he is aware that IN his struggle God has not forsaken him NOR allowed him to be crushed or fall. God has still enabled him to walk rightly and godly. How can you live your life IN suffering in a way that would show that God has not let you fall and that you are confident in Him and his care for you?

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<sup>NLT</sup> **Psalm 56:1** *For the choir director: A psalm of David, regarding the time the Philistines seized him in Gath. To be sung to the tune "Dove on Distant Oaks."*

O God, have mercy on me, for people are hounding me. My foes attack me all day long.

<sup>2</sup> I am constantly hounded by those who slander me, and many are boldly attacking me.

<sup>3</sup> But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you.

<sup>4</sup> I praise God for what he has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me?

<sup>5</sup> They are always twisting what I say; they spend their days plotting to harm me.

<sup>6</sup> They come together to spy on me-- watching my every step, eager to kill me.

<sup>7</sup> Don't let them get away with their wickedness; in your anger, O God, bring them down.

<sup>8</sup> You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book.

<sup>9</sup> My enemies will retreat when I call to you for help. This I know: God is on my side!

<sup>10</sup> I praise God for what he has promised; yes, I praise the LORD for what he has promised.

<sup>11</sup> I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me?

<sup>12</sup> I will fulfill my vows to you, O God, and will offer a sacrifice of thanks for your help.

<sup>13</sup> For you have rescued me from death; you have kept my feet from slipping. So now I can walk in your presence, O God, in your life-giving light.