

- **\*READ Psalm 54/PRAYER\*** One of the things I appreciate about some of the Psalms in the psalter is that we are supplied with a little background information about the circumstances surrounding the Psalms. From Psalm 52-Psalms 59, five out of the eight Psalms give us a superscription concerning what was going on during the writing of the Psalm or what inspired it. Look at this 54th Psalm we just read. A "Maskil of David when the Ziphites came and said to Saul, 'Is not David hiding himself among us?'" This Psalm and the situation surrounding it can be traced back to **I Samuel 23** as David is being pursued by Saul.
  - This isn't the only Psalm to have such a background. In fact, **Psalms 52-59** all seem to have a commonality as far as theme goes.
    - Psalm 52: Set while David is being pursued by Saul and David's location is given up by Doeg the Edomite. (**I Samuel 22**)
    - Psalm 53: A close replication of Psalm 14 that speaks about the foolish person who denies God and seeks after his own desires which are corrupt and abominable.
    - Psalm 54: David's location is revealed to Saul by the Ziphites in **I Samuel 23**.
    - Psalm 55: David's prayer to God asking that He defeat his enemies and comfort him during times of distress.
    - Psalm 56: A request for God's help when David was fleeing from Saul and found himself in Gath. (**I Samuel 21**)
    - Psalm 57: Another request of David to God when he was hiding in caves as he fled from Saul. (**I Sam. 22,24**)
    - Psalm 58: David acknowledging the wickedness of men and requesting that God destroy them to stop their evil ways.
    - Psalm 59: This Psalm was written towards the beginning of Saul's pursuit of David. (**I Samuel 19:11**) Saul was jealous of David's prosperity and sought to have him killed by any means necessary. (**I Sam. 18:14,15**)
  - Do you see the commonality among these Psalms? They seem to all be songs directed towards the idea of asking God for help during times of strife and warfare. As we know, David was not just the eventual King of Israel, but he was a mighty warrior. He was a soldier for the Lord's people and army, and we can learn much from him and these Psalms he wrote while being a soldier in the midst of battle.
  - We, like David, are soldiers. While we might not be literal soldiers engaged in hand to hand combat against physical enemies...we are soldiers engaged against the evil forces of Satan as we strive for the hearts of men. We know well **Ephesians 6:10-17** in which Paul writes about our spiritual warfare. We know about the armor of God that helps us in this battle, but we ought to consider what is said in **vv. 18-20**, as well. Notice that Paul puts a lot of emphasis not just on equipping ourselves for the warfare, but he also stresses that we be a people who are constantly praying and petitioning God for strength, perseverance, and boldness not just for ourselves but also for all the saints engaged in this battle.
  - But what sorts of things ought the Christian Soldier be praying for? I think we can learn some things that would be profitable for us to pray for based upon the things that David mentioned when he wrote the Psalms under consideration this evening. Let's take some time to consider the Christian Soldier's Prayer and what we can pray for that will help us in our battle against Satan and the evil forces we battle against in this life.
- I. **"Lord, help me to trust in your lovingkindness and not in the abundance of riches." (52:7,8; 56:1-4)**
- A. It can be easy for us to take this type of language from David in **Psalm 52** and make application solely on how we ought to not trust in earthly wealth. We know it will let us down because it is temporal. (**Matt. 6:19-21**) But let me also add in what David says in **Psalm 56:1-4**. It might not be that we trust in riches, but it might instead be that we are fearful of those we battle against because make they are more numerous or have more resources than we have to use in this battle.
- B. For all of us, there will be times when we will be fearful because we look around us and we recognize that our foes are both numerous and mighty. It might be that we take some lumps and suffer some setbacks because Satan is a formidable opponent. (**vv.1,2**) However, we must put our trust in God and not be afraid as we battle. (**vv.3,4**) Satan sought God's strength in prayer and we would be wise do the same.

## II. ***"Lord, help me to be one who understands and seeks after you."* (53:2)**

- A. David begins this Psalm by speaking to the foolishness of the person who denies that there is a God in heaven who looks upon all things. He states that this person would do such a thing because he is corrupt and seeks to do no good in his life but to only seek after his own desires. **(53:1)**
- B. David, on the other hand, wants no part of this type of man's direction in this life. Instead, David wants to be like the man who God seeks to find. He wants to find those who understand that there is a God, He is alive, in Him we live, and in Him we survive. **(v.2)** Satan would love to distract us in this battle with anything that this life has to offer, but this prayer begs God to help us keep our focus on Him, His will for us, and striving for godliness and righteousness in this life.

## III. ***"Lord, stop those who seek to do evil."* (54:4,5; 58:10,11)**

- A. While we often verbalize that God hates sin, but loves the sinner...which is very much true. God greatly desires for the sinner to repent and be saved. **(II Peter 3:9)**. However, we must also recognize that we can find Scripture where godly individuals request that God destroy, hinder, or stop the wicked person from having success. Notice here in **54:5** *"destroy them in your faithfulness."* This is strong language.
- B. Also consider what David says in **58:10,11**. He states that the righteous will rejoice when they see evil men brought to justice. We should be glad and we ought to pray to God that evil men will be stopped in their evil ways. I know that might seem strange at times because we want the best for all people, but sometimes the obstinate evil man who has refused God's way simply needs to be stopped. In these Psalms, David shows us here that as soldiers we can and ought to pray to God for the wicked men to be stopped so that others will not suffer at their hands.

## IV. ***"Lord, help me to find peace in the midst of strife."* (55:4-8,16-18; 57:1-3)**

- A. Any soldier who has experienced the heat of war knows the stress that it puts on the mind as well as the body. Not knowing what each day will bring can be exhausting. Again, we might not be engaged in a literal battle, but many of us are well aware of the exhaustion that can come from being caught in the heat of the battle against sin, Satan, and the temptations that present themselves in this life.
- B. There might very well be times when we feel as David did when he wrote **55:4-8**. We might want nothing more than to grow some wings and just fly out of the situation. Unfortunately, that often just isn't an option, and David knew this. So what would he do instead? He said that he would call upon the Lord. He might complain and murmur, but he would do so into the ear of the only one who could bring true peace and comfort. He knew that God alone could bring him peace in the midst of strife. **(55:16-18; 57:1-3)** We would do well to have this mindset of David within ourselves. There is only one place to go when the going gets tough and that is to the wings of God where His lovingkindness dwells.

## V. ***"Lord, help me to sing of Your lovingkindness everyday."* (59:16,17)**

- A. Finally, we conclude this prayer of the Christian soldier by considering how we can keep our mindset upbeat in the midst of struggles. We want to find peace, but we also want to find something that can keep us encouraged and upbeat as we battle along each day. So what can we do? David said that we would keep an upbeat heart by continually singing the praises of God each day. **(59:16,17)**
- B. David was keenly aware of where the strength he possessed came from. He knew that God supplied him with every good thing that could help him to avoid defeat at the hands of his enemies whether it be Saul or a Canaanite of some sort. Therefore, David's joy for his successes compelled him to sing of the Lord and write the Psalms that he did that we have in our Bibles.
- C. What about us? Do we feel compelled to sing about the goodness of God? If not then it might be that we need to pray for a more appreciative and upbeat mindset that will help us to give God constant glory for His lovingkindness that we experience even in the day of our distresses. Like David, may we continually pray for God to help us sing of His goodness all the day long.

David was a man who was acutely familiar with distresses and all sorts of dangers and battles in his life. The man who he had sworn allegiance to was after his life, yet he turned only to God in prayer and song and persevered to the end. May we consider the Psalms of David and see where we might too be able to pray the words that were on his heart as we battle against Satan in this life. May God be praised and honored as we excel for His Glory in the battle for the souls of man.