

## **Beware of the Dog** Psalm 59: 1-5, 16-17

Our text today comes from another Michtam of David, a psalm that he wanted to ensure was preserved for future generations. We also have an informative notation in the heading – *when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him*. Clearly this psalm was penned early in David's life, after he had been anointed king, and while he was forced to flee from Saul.

The enemies of David were relentless in their pursuit, committed to taking his life and removing the rival to the throne. In his weariness, David described the men of Saul as dogs who incircle the city, seeking to attack and devour their prey. David knew this ravaging pack was always pursuing him, and he needed the help and protection of God to survive.

Our situation is much different, in that we are not relentlessly pursued by those who seek our lives, and yet we face a very determined adversary. Peter described him as a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour. The hounds of hell are always on the prowl, seeking to defeat and destroy those who are committed to living for Christ. Like David, we need the Lord to defend us from their attack, and enable us to remain steadfast in the faith.

As we discuss the [realities](#) of David's situation, I want to consider the warning: [Beware of the Dog](#).

**I. His Plea for Mercy (1-2)** – Like so many of David's psalms, this one begins with a plea for God to provide mercy and help for his situation. Notice:

**A. David sought Deliverance (1a, 2)** – [Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God.](#) <sup>[2]</sup> [Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.](#) Being surrounded by those who sought his life, David cried out for the Lord to miraculously deliver him from his enemies. Like so many times before, David encountered a situation that required more than he possessed. If God were not merciful, providing deliverance, David knew he would surely perish at the hands of his enemies. He knew where to find help, and he cried out for God to deliver him.

- In an increasingly dark and sinful world, we too find ourselves surrounded by the enemy. While we may not face a perilous situation physically, the spiritual attacks we encounter can be devastating. Like David, we have no recourse within ourselves; our only hope is for the Lord to intervene in our situation, delivering us from the assault of the enemy.

**B. David sought Defense** (1b) – [defend me from them that rise up against me](#). David found himself surrounded by the enemy. Escape was not an option. The enemy had come against him and there was no way to escape the perilous situation he encountered. David's only hope was for the mighty God to defend him against the attack he faced. The word defend has the idea of "*being secured within a place of safety*." Since David could not escape the situation he faced, he cried out for the Lord to secure him where he was, to defend him against the enemy.

- That is powerful when we pause to consider it. The enemy attacks often when we are weak and vulnerable. He comes against us when we are facing situations that are beyond our ability to control. In those moments, we need the Lord to secure us, right where we are, under the shadow of His mighty wings. Isn't that a blessing? The storm may continue to rage around us, and yet God is able to secure us within His awesome presence and power!

**II. His Peril through Adversity** (3-5) – Although God was well aware of the situation, David rehearsed the seriousness of the peril he faced. He mentioned:

**A. The Determination** (3a) – [For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul](#). David revealed the relentless nature and utter determination of Saul and those who obeyed his commands. They were patient in their pursuit, willing to lie in wait for the opportunity to attack David. These men were determined to remove the threat Saul perceived to the throne. Apparently, they failed to realize their efforts were in vain. David had not anointed himself to be king; he was anointed of God, and God would preserve his life to ascend to the throne of Israel.

**B. The Aggression** (3b) – [the mighty are gathered against me](#). This was not just a few random renegades being zealous for Saul; mighty men had gathered against David. He was largely outnumbered and in desperate need of the Lord's help. Saul's mighty men had come against David with the purpose of killing him.

- We need to realize the enormity of the attacks that come against us. We are not fighting against flesh and blood, but against the rulers of darkness within the world. Satan has initiated a full-blown attack on the church, our homes, and our nation as a whole. Like David, we must realize and admit the severity of this attack. We will never overcome in ourselves. We are in desperate need of a move of God in our day, empowering and encouraging us to boldly stand for the Truth, while resisting the devil so he might flee from us. We are in a spiritual warfare that requires the provision of God.

**C. The Deception** (3c-4a) – *not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD.* <sup>[4a]</sup> *They run and prepare themselves without my fault.* David was not being arrogant, nor was he claiming sinless perfection; yet he realized these attacks were without merit. He was being falsely accused and pursued for crimes he had not committed. While the enemy sought to portray David as a wicked man who sought to corrupt Israel, these claims were unsubstantiated.

- This should not have been surprising to David, and it should come as no surprise when the enemy raises false accusations today. He is the father of lies and a master of deceit. He seeks to condemn those who follow Christ, even if his accusations are without merit. This reveals the necessity for righteous living, so when accusations are raised, they will immediately be known as false accusations. We must guard our testimony among the world. The enemy will accuse us for sure, but we can live in such a way that the accusations will not stick.

**D. The Recognition** (4b-5) – *awake to help me, and behold.* <sup>[5]</sup> *Thou therefore, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen: be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah.* David was in a perilous situation and yet he recognized the power and majesty of God. He knew God had anointed him king over Israel. He was resting in the grace and provision of God, depending on Him to bring about that which He had promised. David was unable to defeat the enemy, and he cried out for the Lord to help him. David also prayed for the Lord to deal with his enemies according to their sin. It appears to me that David is praying for God to vindicate His good name among men. David depended on the Lord to provide and do as He pleased.

- I know that we are aware of the Lord's mighty power and ability, and yet at times we live as if He is unable to meet our needs. The Lord is more than able to provide for every situation we face, regardless of the circumstances. We must recognize His divine attributes and rest in His sovereign power. He has not brought us this far to forsake us now; we are secure within His mighty hand. Our God is good and He is able!

**III. His Praise for Security** (16-17) – At this moment it doesn't appear God had provided deliverance as of yet, but David praised Him anyway, knowing God would meet his need. Notice:

**A. David's Focus** (16a) – *But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning.* The dogs of Saul continued to circle about David, looking for an opportunity to attack. As of yet his situation had not improved, but David made a positive decision in the midst of great adversity – he chose to praise the Lord in the midst of his difficulty. Regardless of the enemy he faced, God was still good and worthy of praise. He looked to the Lord in worship rather than focusing on the enemy's advance.

**B. David's Fortress** (16b) – *for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.* David revealed the reason he was able to focus on the Lord, even in the midst of adversity – God was his defense and fortress, one who had proven himself faithful in the past. This was a different situation, but David had no reason to doubt God. He had always provided for him, and David was confident the Lord would defend him again.

- What have we to fear? We face an enemy who possesses much power, but he doesn't have all power. He is determined to attack as often as he can, seeking to do as much damage as possible, but we are kept within the strong tower of our God. He has preserved us thus far, providing victory in times of need, and there is no reason to doubt Him now. Our Lord has always been faithful to care for us, and He will continue to do so until He calls us home!

**C. David's Faith** (17) – *Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.* As you read the words of this particular psalm, you sense the concern David felt and the great need he faced. However, he did not succumb to fear and doubt. He was settled in the Lord, confident that God would provide. His faith in the Lord overcame his fear of the enemy. Saul was a formidable enemy, but he was no match for the Lord. The dogs continued to circle about, but David rested in the Lord.

- Faith is a topic we often discuss, but at times it is little exercised. We know that God is able to provide for our needs, and yet we often allow fear and doubt to overcome our faith. If you are saved by grace, you are secure in the hand of the Lord. The enemy may rage, and we may face persecution at some point, but the adversary cannot remove the saved from the body of Christ. Our eternal destiny is secure in Christ!

**Conclusion:** I am often amazed at how relevant these psalms are for the situations we face. God has preserved His eternal Word for our benefit. The same principles that David applied to his life are relevant in our lives today. We will face the enemy's attacks as long as we live, but we are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus, our risen Lord. We have nothing to fear. If you are struggling today, facing an assault from the enemy, look to Jesus. He alone can provide the peace and strength you need to endure. If you are yet unsaved, come to Him in repentance and faith. He is the only means of salvation and reconciliation to a holy God.