

## Sermon 24 Jan 2021

Good Day all,

I hope everybody is well today. We are really blessed to have been given another day to serve our Lord.

We want to extend our sympathies to Kokkie Wagner and his family with the sad loss of his wife Tersia.

### Seeking Refuge

#### **Psalm 62:5-12**

There has been one custom for churches through out the ages and that is the church has been a place of refuge. If someone needed to be protected from the law they could go to the church for protection. The church has been a place of sanctuary.

In Biblical times there were cities of refuge where a person could go to and would be safe from the law, but with time these disappeared. I think having the church as a place of sanctuary is something we have got right.

Hopefully churches are still places of refuge. Hopefully when someone enters a church that they feel safe, they feel protected. If our churches aren't this then we need to do something to make them feel safer. In the end it is not the church that should be a place of the refuge we seek, it should be God that we are looking for.

#### **1. Waiting in Silence.**

The NRSV translation of the Bible begins this Psalm differently than the NIV. It begins by saying that "for God alone my soul waits in silence." The NIV takes a different approach, saying that "My soul find rest in God alone". So finding rest and waiting in silence are tied to each other in a powerful way. What does it mean to wait for God in silence? In the Psalm God was described as a rock, a fortress, a refuge. We are told that we can trust in God, we are able to find deliverance and honour through Him.

A child who waits for something doesn't always do so in silence. How many of us parents are not familiar with "are we there yet" when travelling a distance. They allow their impatience to be known. A child -different to an adult can get away with being impatient. We may feel like that but cannot express it as easily. We all to be impatient in our own ways, we all want things to happen sooner than later. We have hard times waiting in general, let alone waiting in silence. We want things now, fast food, overnight mail, instant emails. We can all learn from the Psalmist what it means to wait in silence.

Waiting in silence does have something to do with rest, so the NIV translation isn't wrong. It is just lacking something. When you learn to wait on God in silence, you will find rest. It isn't easy to wait for God in silence. Sometimes it feels like He has forgotten us. We sometimes think that if we make more noise about what it is that we want, God will hear us better and answer us sooner. The Psalmist had a different idea. He knew that he could trust God and therefore he was willing to wait in silence. He was willing to allow God to work in God's own way and in His own time. He would ask God to be with him and to guide and care for him and he would wait upon the Lord, and then he would rest.

## **2. Worrying**

We often tie our prayers together with our worries. We often pray and ask God to work, and then we continue to worry about the things that trouble us and because of this we find no rest. We can but learn from the Psalmist. We can learn from how he trusts. We can learn from what he believes. He puts his request to God and finds rest in the fact that He knows God will work. Finding rest in God is about allowing God to deal with the things that trouble us and therefore learning not to worry about them.

In the above paragraph I mentioned the problem that we have of asking God to take our problem and we then continue to worry about them. I like to define worry as spending time and energy focusing on things that we can do nothing about. Worry is a conversation you have with yourself about the things you cannot change. We unfortunately tend to spend far too much time doing this. It is very clear from scripture that worrying is something we shouldn't do. I wouldn't call worry sin. It isn't the same as lying, murder or adultery. It is a lack of trust. It is a relationship with God that is not what it is suppose to be. We are told that we are able to cast our cares and worries on God and to trust Him with them. In Matthew Jesus tells the disciples not to worry about tomorrow, for it will take care of itself. This seems to be too simplistic for the real world. We are so inclined to think because Jesus lived 2000 years ago that He had no worries. When you look at the world that Jesus lived in, that's not quite true. Jesus and the folk of that time had as much to worry about as we do maybe even more. When Jesus told them not to worry, He was telling them to do something foreign from the way they had lived. He was telling them to trust God that they could not see. Jesus modelled this trust in His own life. He travelled around from town to town without having a place to stay. He counted on others and God to provide Him with food and place to stay. He did not gather up riches, he didn't save for a rainy day. Instead he lived in the present and put all his energy to do what God had sent Him to do.

The second problem we can have is to trust in something or somebody other than God. Psalm 62:10 tells us that even if our riches increase, we are not to set our hearts on them. In verse 9 it tells us that people are not worth putting trust in, as they will let you down. We spend a lot of time putting our trust in the things of the world.

We spend a lot of energy making sure that we are able to take care of ourselves and those we love. If nothing else, we want to be sure that we can count on ourselves. We find we cannot count on things of the world and also most definitely not on ourselves. We have seen how people who put their trust in the things of the world lose everything. Trusting in this world is trusting in something arbitrary and unreal. It is trusting in something that does not have control. The same is true when we trust ourselves. We think we are in control. We think we can handle everything that is sent our way, but there is so much in this world that is out of our control, there is so much we don't have power in. Why trust in someone or something without power when you can trust in God who has all the power?

### **3. Power and Love**

The Psalmist says in verses 11 and 12. "Power belongs to you, God, and with you, Lord, is unfailing love." This is why we cannot trust in the things of this world, we can trust in God. Power belongs to Him. He created this world. It is through Him that the sun rises every morning. It is through Him that the stars shine. It is through Him that the rain comes at the correct time.

There are times of drought, natural disasters, there is pain, illness and death and the Covid situation we are in. We are inclined to ask where is God in these situations- its hard to see Him. It's hard to believe that a good God is in control. It is important to realise that though God is in control, we also do live in a world of sin. When sin entered into the world, so did these things that trouble us. Now this doesn't mean that we can look at someone who is sick and figure that their sickness comes from some secret sin in their lives. There are some Christians that believe this. But this belief is not biblical. Jesus was taken to a blind man and His disciples asked Him, "Why is this man blind? Is it because of his sin or is it because of his parent's sin?" The disciples believed that a man's blindness must be a result of sin. Jesus replied to their question with a definite "Neither" The blindness that this man faced was not his own fault or that of his parents. Jesus went on to say that this man was blind so that God could be glorified. Jesus then went on and healed him.

God is a God of power, He is the source of all power. And yet, He allows us to live in a world where we are not always able to see His power clearly. We hear the good news that the psalmist shares, that God is also a God of love.

So don't trust in the things of this world. Don't trust in money. Don't trust in the rich and the powerful, Don't trust in the low and weak. Don't trust in yourself. Instead trust in the Rock and Salvation that is available to all people. This is where we find our hope. This is where we find peace. Our God is a God of power and love and therefore we can trust Him. Therefore we can rest in Him, therefore we can stand with the Psalmist and call God our refuge, our strength and our fortress. Therefore we can wait silently on God.

Amen

