

→ Norfolk - Oct - 30, 77 P.M. VXRTE
(P. out line -) into. Redpath -

"A GOOD MAN LIVING WITH THE WRONG CROWD"

Psalm 56

INTRODUCTION:

There are at present, many voices clammering for our attention. On the streets, we hear it. And we almost despair that there is any remedy at all. There is so much confusion in the world. It is heard even in the realm of religion - that there is disease that is deadly. And Christians make friendships that are very bother-some and that should never be entered into.

I went to visit a college library last week & read in the Paper the night before that several walls had been made holier - by the use of fists. Some fellows wrecked one of the Dormitories. I'm glad my name was not in the Paper! 9 students had to move out - of course I had never moved in! (Says it happened -

Quite often, a whole person's life depends upon the kind of company that he chooses. The crowd that he runs with. The friends that he picks out as associates. One night after a bombing raid in London, an evangelist was passing out Gospel literature. And he encountered an old skeptic - "this bombing is Hell, isn't it." Absolutely Hell the skeptic exclaimed. "No," replied the evangelist -- and I will give you three reasons why it is not Hell. First, "I am a Christian, and there are no Christians in Hell." Second, "there is a public house around the corner - and there are no public houses in Hell." Third, "here I am proclaiming the Gospel, and there is no Gospel in Hell."

Four weeks later the evangelist was preaching in Hyde Park. When he asked those to come forward who wished to accept Christ. The old skeptic was the first to come.

→ Many times a man finds himself in the wrong company, or the wrong location. And the only salvation is, for him to make a change.

In the development of Christian character, sometimes we have the darkness to fall upon us. The sun seems to go down and set. And everything is lost. And we wonder if there is any hope of recovering.

It was such a moment in (David's life) that we are now to consider in this sermon. I think everybody finds it very comforting that the (Bible) does not flatter or gloss over its heroes. It tells the truth about them, no matter how unpleasant it may be. So that the things that are taking place and shaping their character, are all available for us to study. Here was David, he had been chosen to be king. He was to become the great leader of the land. And he was to have great wealth. But instead of being on the throne, and being that kind of king that he was destined to be, he was in exile. And he was literally begging for bread. He had been anointed by the spirit of God. But David was running for his life, from his enemies. And seemingly all of his close friends had left him.

So often in the providences of God, things seems to run contrary to his promises. But this may only be a test of our faith. He may ultimately accomplish his purpose for our lives. In a way that he could never do it if the pathway was smoothe and there were no rough places. It is when we have problems, that seem to overwhelm us, that a man of God learns some lessons that he would never learn otherwise. It isn't easy to walk with God during situations that are difficult. Now to walk with God when things are smoothe, that may be.

Now this is a strange experience that we are going to look into tonight. In David's experience - and perhaps it is not very strange, because it may be your own human experience, that we are talking about. Now I am thankful that we can consider this in the presence of God and learn something - whatever the Holy Spirit wants to teach us.

We want to look at some of the highlights in this Psalm and in David's life that brought this Psalm forth. Because it was during the time that he was in bad company that he was with the wrong crowd, and all of this developed.

Ps 56

I have chosen to outline this -- first, dishonoring experience. V. 1.
Second, describing enemies. V. 1-7. Third, deliverance expressed. V. 8-13.

I. DISHONORING EXPERIENCE - V. 1

How often we find that even a good man gets off with the wrong crowd. He finds himself really out of his true setting.

You remember, Peter the Disciple of our Lord, during the trial of Jesus. He found himself warming by the enemies fire. He went right in the courtyard and warmed himself among the enemies. While he was with the wrong crowd and keeping the wrong company, he ultimately denied his Lord.

There are so many illustrations. For example, the prodigal son. He had a lovely father and home to live in. But he asked his father to give him his inheritance, and he was going to make a big trip. And so, he left and went off and sinned. And we soon find that this boy who would have been in good hands was off with the wrong crowd. And he was out feeding the swine and starving from hunger.

Now David had this dishonoring experience. He had fled from Saul. I Sam. 21:10.

And he was sore afraid of Achish - the king of Gath. I Sam. 21:12.

Fear is always an enemy of faith. Now this is something of the background of this dishonoring experience. Here is a man who grows and triumphs and over comes his faith to believe God. To rest in God's word. To enjoy God's promises. But to doubt God and to question God's motives. A man will dishonor God.

David's history here is that he was going to a situation not because any failure of sin, as is pointed out in Psalm 59. But simply, because of God's purpose, providence, and God's love - this fire of testing was preparing David for a throne that was already his and that had been chosen for him.

I think we need to underline this - to understand what is happening to David at this point, is all in the will of God to make the man a man of God. It takes but a moment to make a convert - but it may take a lifetime to really manufacture a saint.

David should not have feared, but he did. Neither should we fear, but we do. Sometimes, if we are honest in the winds that are contrary and they threaten to overturn the ship of our lives, we have fear. Whereas we ought to hear the words - be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid. Matt. 14:27.

David, in his plight had to leave his home, his friends, and leave Jonathon's love. And he went out into the unknown and he was afraid. He betrayed the fear of his heart. The growing uncertainty. And the promises of God. I Sam. 23. He said to his friend, Jonathon, "there is but a step between me and death." The day when he had been anointed by the spirit of God, and received the assurance that he was chosen to occupy the throne, had now grown very dim.

David is now looking at God through the threatening clouds of opposition. It is very easy to lose our spiritual vision and it is very easy for us to panic. But how do you think it began in David's life. In this Old Testament picture. It is not enough to receive the anointing of the spirit of God once - ye must abide. The anointed which you have received of him, abideth in you. Abide in him. When he shall appear, we may have no fear of the consequences. I John 2:27-28.

Could David's dishonoring experience here be something like those that we have. Sometimes we rely upon the past experiences. Have you neglected the daily renewal of God's grace and power in your life. When God thrusts us out into some uncertainty and problem that would trust our faith. Do we think that faith is overcome by fear and we begin to draw back.

Do you ask God daily with a hungry heart, and with a soul that is ready for a new anointing of the spirit, to bless you in the needs of that day. The Lord looks down and sees you deeply in love with the Heavenly Father. Are you deeply concerned day by day that you might do his will. Or, are you relying upon the experiences of some by-gone days, in the past.

Now there is a very simple practical test that your religious experience is very inadequate. It cannot stand the down-to-earth examination in the very simple details of life.

Before you come to church on Sunday morning, you spend time decorating your body.

How long did you spend preparing your heart. If you come to teach the children in Sunday School. Or to perform some other service. And you come to worship the living God. Do you get ready for that hour of dedication. Has God heard from you the cry of a hungry soul that recognizes the needs of daily grace. Or, are you teaching, serving, and worshipping - and banking upon some ~~spirits~~ which you had twenty years ago. When you met God for the first time.

There is such an emptyness of our hearts today. So many Christians - no wonder there is fear that comes through the door and faith flies out the window.

1 Sam. 21:1

David reported in I Sam. 21. Made his way to the village of Nob - which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. There the tabernacle was pitched at this time. And there in the sanctuary lived 86 priest. I Sam. 22:18-19. I doubt whether much disturbed their quietness. An occasional visitor who came to perform his vows before God. They had no weapons of defense because they didn't need any. What they had was the sword of Goliath. Which was a memento of David's great victory.

Now in this dishonoring experience, David came to this place seeking food and weapons, and also, I think some guidance. And the priests immediately suspected that something was wrong. Why art thou alone. No man comes with thee. The priest of Ahimelech seemed to have been unaware of the jealousy between Saul and David. He didn't know the situation and therefore he questioned why the king's son-in-law should be all alone without any attendants with him.

Now the fact that David is not right with God is detected the moment he entered God's sanctuary. Somehow, I wish that the power of the spirit of God might be upon

our people in this church. That everytime we come into the sanctuary, a spirit might say to each individual - why are you like this.

1 Sam 21:2

David was found out and he was afraid that Ahimelech might tell Saul. Thinking quickly, he told a deliberate lie. Saul has sent me on an urgent mission. I am sworn to secrecy. Just around the corner is my band of men waiting for me to rejoin them. I've been away from home for three days. ^{v.3} I must have some food.

Now suddenly, there must have been a real guilty feeling come over David.

1 Sam 21:7

Doeg

Surely we know that Doeg had come there to pay his own vows to God. And was listening to all. David knew at once that he would be betrayed by Doeg. That he would go back to Saul and tell him where David was. Ceasing Goliath's sword, he ^{v.9} ran for his life to be with Achish - king of Gath. ^{v.10}

David lost his confidence in God and in the fulfillment of purpose in his life. That had been revealed for him. He went to God's house for comfort, for help, and for guidance. But he detected that something had gone wrong in his soul. Instead of acknowledging the truth to the only one who could help him, he had told a lie. And he ran for his life.

Now some people would say - well, what of it? He got away with it, didn't he? He didn't get away with it. He learned one of the most bitter lessons of any man's experience. Turn to I. Sam. 22:20-23. David feared that Doeg told Saul of David's

1 Sam 22:18-19

-8-

visit to the priests of Nob. But he glossed over the fact, that Ahimelech did not know of Saul's emnity. And suggested that Ahimelech was taking sides with David. Against the king. And Saul sent^{for} all 86 of the priests with their wives and families and commanded Doeg to slay them. All of them died in the ruthless murder, except one. One day David was in the cave of Adullam with the others who had followed him into refuge. He saw running toward him a man who had escaped the slaughter. When he was told about it - David cried out in horror with an awful sense of guilt upon his soul. I have occasioned to death thy persons of thy father's house.

We can realize here the doubting of God's word and promises what it costs. Covered up before God, David acknowledged his fears, his doubts, and no man can cover his sins and prosper. David's sin led to a real tragedy.

Do you go to the house of God for comfort. Then realize that the spirit will find you out. The voice of God will say to you - what about this and what about that. Perhaps your spirit is cold and indifferent, and God asks you what is wrong. He knows why you are like that. But he wants you to tell him. He wants you to confess that you have sinned. He has a purpose for your life. You have doubted his word and his promises. You have failed to renew before him every morning through the anointing of his spirit. You have become spiritually stale.

God knows this, but instead of admitting it - you cover it up. And you pretend all is well, you say. The need is in the life of the unsaved sinner here. You say, well preacher, why don't you get after the unconverted. And leave us alone. Why try to medle with us. So you cover up your lie to God. And you go on your way - holding to your sins. Sins is very expensive.

God may forgive and restore you. But the consequences of your sin may involve

not only you, but others who are innocent. Perhaps the results may continue for years to come. Seeds may be scattered beyond your recovery. And a bitter harvest may be reaped.

I challenge you that reliance upon past blessings is not enough. Coming to the house of God for comfort, without being able to tell and face up to your sins, is not enough. If God has to put you in some dark place with some trial, it is not to drive you to sin - but it is to drive you to your daily repeated surrender in which he will abide with you. When you are living by faith, through the circumstances though they be dark, life will truly be blessed.

We find that this was a dishonoring experience because David had gone to Achish. Now here was a good man but he had gone to bad company. Why had a man of God gone to live with the Philistines. And this man was an unbeliever.

Perhaps, Christians do this sometimes. Because they find better treatment among the enemies than they do the people of God. And this was the thing that happened here.

*Achish King of Gath -
1 Sam 21:13 changed his behavior - Med man ✓
clowning at No State spit upon his beard ✓*

Achish trust up a friendship with David. Perhaps he relived the powerful rival of his kingdom, and the time when David cut off the head of Goliath. Maybe Achish was glad to meet the man who had killed his adversary. But he could not control the feeling of the people who recognized David's presence. This was a real problem for them. This is a tragic picture, because the Philistine's wanted to get rid of David. And at this moment of a dishonoring experience which David had, he examines his own heart - and he begins to take refuge from his dangers. As well as the company that he finds himself in. And he begins to think about just

what he needs to look to for help. And I am really thankful that here in the Bible we have this picture. And for this moment, he turns and he writes down the feelings of his soul in Psalm 56. Here is a good man with the wrong crowd - and he has had a very dishonoring experience.

II. DESCRIBING HIS ENEMIES - V. 1-7

V. 1 David begins at that moment to write down exactly what he is involved in and the kind of mess that he is mixed up in. And judging this from the human standpoint, he is hopeless. He has really been tried in the balances and found wanting. Will God discard this man and put him on the side. God trusted him - and here he is. He's left his home, his friends, and had his faith tested. He is just going to be another casualty. How is he going to get back on the field of Christian service. And serve God. Has God finished with him. That may be our own shallow judgement. But notice here how David describes his enemies --that he wakes up to the situation that he is in.

V. 1 - Eager. The enemies of this godly man are about to swallow him up. The enemy pants after me like a greedy animal. Now Satan has a number of allies that are always after us.

V. 2 - They are numerous. There be many that fight against us. David said I have many many enemies.

They are constant. My enemies would daily, he says, everyday they bring their hostility. Evil never rests.

V. 5 - They are dishonest. He says they twist and they pervert, and they misrepresent me as things that I never intended that they might injure me.

V. 6 - They confer with each other. They combine against me. All of these evil ones get together and they direct everything against me.

They are secret - they conceal. They hide themselves. Their design is crafty.

They are cruel. They wait for my soul, he says. They seek to deprive me of my physical life. They count my steps. And they are going to calculate to take my life.

V. 7 - Shall they escape. So very quickly David writes down, and he describes these enemies. And what a description that is.

Sometimes we do not think, as we ought about the type of friendships, and the crowd we ought to be with.

A minister once preached a sermon on the recognition of friends in Heaven. During the following week, somebody dropped a note in his suggestion box in the lobby of the church. Preacher, could you make it convenient to preach on the recognition of friends on earth. I have been coming to your church for six months and nobody has ever taken any notice of me.

Now it is very important that we make the right choice in the kinds of friends and companionships which we have. It is said, in answer to what makes your life so beautiful - I have a friend.

David here, with the wrong group of people, describes these enemies.

III. DELIVERANCE EXPRESSED - V. 8-13.

First, Compassion. V. 8. Tears.

Second, Certainty. Knowledge. V. 9.

Third, Committment. Vows. V. 12.

V. 8 Compassion
Now let us look at these for just a moment as we see David writing down his feelings here. He says, V. 8 - Thou has put my tears into thy bottle. He speaks of the compassion of God. That somehow God is taking note, of his tears, and collecting them in a bottle. The Romans had a custom that in a time of mourning or sorrow, or on a funeral occasion - a friend went to the one in sorrow and wiped away the tears from his eyes, with a piece of cloth. And squeezed the tears into a small bottle and carefully preserved them as a memorial of friendship. Now David says, God knows he is there. Yea, there is no tear that has been shed when his eyes were raised to Heaven in prayer, that was fallen to the ground. God has gathered them all up in a bottle. In his book.

Oh, as an old hymn that describes this --

"Thou countest, how often, a Christian weeps. And where his grief may lie. No silent tear can be too small. Thou takest and layest it by."

God who counts the hairs of a man's head. Job 19:23, Mal. 3:16. David here feels that deliverance is on the way.

v 19 - Certainty
2

The second way that David expressed his deliverance was with certainty. V. 9. When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back. This I know - for God is with me.

Certainty - plus knowledge. Knowledge is power. That's what people say. And there is much truth in it. It is not always universal truth. But there is a kind of knowledge that is born of experience that is really something that enlightens. It brings life - it doesn't bring death. And the knowledge here which David speaks of - he is certain, he says. That he has this knowledge. He had come to know about his own sin. And that is important for people to know that.

In the city of New York a few months ago, the son of a contractor ran away with the wife of a multi-millionaire. In the eyes of some, it was quite a romantic affair. But to those most intimately concerned - it proved a tragic disappointment. Ten days later, they were found locked in each other's arms - before a gas jet. On the table was a note written by the woman. It read as follows: "We have been accustomed to laugh, Fred and I, at the moral law. At a lot of man-made rules to frighten timid souls, into being good. But now we have learned through experience

that sin is death. Yea, many times worse than death.

Now that was knowledge that came but it was practically worthless to these people. They died because they were in the excitement of great importance in their eyes and they had never really settled the first thing that needed to be settled. So their knowledge was not very certain and it was not very practical. But the knowledge possessed by David is worth having. It was priceless. And if you miss it - then you miss the most important thing in life, and your life is incomplete. It is a tragedy when men do not know and have this knowledge. As you listen to him say, out of his own lips, this I know. That God is for me.

And the wonder of it is, that he did not get this second-handed. Many things that I know are second-handed. But here is something that David had, and it was something that he knew was true.

One day in London an atheist sought to make sport of an uneducated man who had been converted a few years before. Do you know anything about Jesus Christ, he asked. Yes, by the grace of God, I do. Was the answer. When was he born. Was the next question. Well, the ignorant saint gave the incorrect answer. How old was he when he died. Again, the answer was not right. Other questions were asked with the same result. And the atheist said, you do not know so much about Jesus as you thought you did.

I know all too little was his modest answer. But I know this, three years ago I was one of the worst drunkards in the East end of London. Three years ago my wife was a broken-hearted woman. My children were as afraid as if I had been a wild beast.

Today I have one of the happiest homes in London. When I come home at the close of
a day, my wife and children are glad to see me. (Jesus Christ has done this for me.
This I know.)

This I know, that God is for me. Look at the concrete of this rich knowledge.

He knows that God is. Now being reared in a pious home in your childhood and knowing about the existence of God is not enough. But as you grow in knowledge, it finally comes to that realization. He knows that God is. He reaches this conclusion. Of all of the heavens in the earth - he has discovered that here is God. He discovered not only that God is real. But he discovered that God cares. Listen to him again -- this I know, that God is for me. He came to realize through his own personal experience. That God loved him individually. That God singled him out from all the other people that ever lived upon the universe. All of those that were living at that time, all of those that were head in the bosom of the earth - that God had bestowed his personal care upon him. What a tremendous and transforming knowledge. Life can never be the same to one who knows in his heart, and realizes to the depths of his soul and God cares for this world. But for him personally.

The universe was a small affair. As he thought about it, and his faith - and that is the way we ought to look at the pages of the New Testament. I am constantly surprised at the thrill and the amazing thing about Jesus love - this love he gives not simply to the crowds or to the groups, or to a few Disciples that he had close to him. But he was interested in folks like you. He gave himself without any consideration. He gave his precious energy to lepers. Blind people. He that hath seen me hath seen the father.

I think David also discovered that not only did God care for men but that God was working in his behalf. In every way within his power. Bless his life in the way that he needs a blessing. He has already said that God is acquainted with his tears. And he stores them up in a bottle.

3 Now, third, and finally - deliverance is expressed not only with compassion. And tears. Not only with certainty and knowledge. But finally with committment and vows. V. 12.

In V. 12 he says, thou vows are upon me oh God. I will render praises unto thee. Now, only one life will soon be past. Only what is done for Christ will last. These words need to be burned in our conscience and in our mind. Here was a man who had gotten mixed up with the wrong crowd. He is described after that dishonorable experience - and he is writing about that experience. It is marvelous. He says, I made some vows.

Jacob Gen. 28:20.

Yes, the knowledge that he had of God had some influence upon his life. God is for me, he seems. And he says, I will put my trust. I will not be afraid of what man can do unto me. Therefore, it was natural for him. His life being beset by fear. And he is going to come in the face of all of his enemies and all of his heartaches, and he is going to make a vow to commit all, unto God. But God has delivered him - even from death. And God is going to keep his feet from falling. God is going to help him to walk through life. That he might walk before God and in the land of the living. That is really trust and faith.

I imagine if you looked around you - you would see that there is power around

you.

There is a story about Elisha in the book of Kings. In which he comes out in the morning and discovers in which the city in which they were stopping was surrounded by an army. Humanly speaking, there was no way out. There were no one-way streets to get out. There was nothing ahead but capture and death. He said, alas, what shall we do. And the prophet hears the news and he begins to pray. That did not surprise the servant - that is what he expected. After he had prayed, he was amazed beyond words what Elisha requested. He did not ask for deliverance. He did not ask for God to think up some desperate way for God to get him out of it. His prayer was, Lord, open my servant's eyes that he may see. And when his eyes were opened, he saw - the horses and the chariots a fire round about. And he realized that they that be with us are more than they that be against us. And that's the thing that David had come to realize. Walking before God in the life of the living. Before God in the sunshine of life. This enabled him to walk in the sunshine. How splendid and how wonderful. So many of us live in the shadows. When we could walk in the sunshine.

Nothing could rob him of the sunshine that was there blessing his life. He was now determined to be faithful. In every way unto his Lord.

Have you discovered this. Are you faithful unto God. Do you have real love for God. Does your faithfulness result in love for your church. We mentioned this week in a little short message we gave - if your car starts one out of three times, do you consider that a faithful car. If your paperboy skips your house about three times in seven days, would you think that he was faithful. If you failed to come to work a couple days a month - would your boss consider that faithful. If your

refrigerator quits working one day out of ten. If your water heater should not supply you with hot water, say two days a week. Would it be faithful. If you miss Sunday School and Worship two or three times a month - are you faithful.

David had walked on the edge - and he was crying out to the Lord. He said, I just trust thee. When he made this decision that he was going to trust God, things began to turn around for him. Can a man in the wrong company who has been doubting and fearing God, can such a man really talk like that. Yes, he can. Other people cannot see him. All they can see is a back-slider who is drifting away from God. Behaving like a fool. But in his heart he despises himself. And from the depths of his soul, he cries out - be merciful to me, oh God. V. 1. Oh God.



NO
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Hebrews 10:38

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SOUTHSIDE BAPTIST NEWS
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About Southside Baptist for Southside Baptists
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FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

IN PAUL HARVEY'S COLUMN A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, there was a story of a young lad whose early life had been wholesome and exemplary. Brought up in a God-fearing home, he had both respected and accepted the Christian tenets of his parents...But during his last year in high school, he came under the influence of one of the members of the staff, who happened to be a very brilliant scholar, but also, unfortunately, a man of sordid life and profane tongue. Soon the young lad was emulating his hero, and causing his parents no end of concern. He became sullen and rebellious, and his attitude completely contemptible. He would ignore his parents' advice, shun their company, and ridicule their way of life.

(ONE MIDNIGHT), HIS FATHER COULD ENDURE THE SITUATION no longer, so he stole softly into his son's bedroom. The air was heavy with the stale stench of over-indulgence. But to his surprise, he discovered that the boy's mother had preceded him, and was kneeling silently at the bedside. He noticed how she stroked her son's hair, and kept on kissing his forehead. And he noticed how her cheeks were wet with many tears. Seeing her husband, she turned to him and whispered softly through her tears, "He won't let me love him when he's awake." ...selected

MAYBE THIS HAS BEEN AN EXPERIENCE IN YOUR OWN family. My friends, it is the experience of God so often. He wants to love us, but we become sullen, rebellious, and our attitude becomes contemptuous. We ignore His advice, we shun His company and we ridicule His divine word and ways. God has to love us, many times, while we "are sleeping" too.