

Reflections for North Bridge Baptist Church

March 29, 2020

My hope and prayer is that everyone is doing well. At this point in time there are now more than 3000 people in Illinois who have been diagnosed with COVID-19. There are certainly others that are infected and yet to be tested. The numbers have increased in the counties in our area. So, I pray for God's protection for each of you.

This week I have selected Psalm 62 for us to look at together. Please read it aloud. If you are a couple or family you may want to share in the reading with each person reading a verse at a time. Remember these were public songs that were used in worship by our Old Testament friends. Jesus quoted from the Psalms on many occasions, even as he was dying on the cross. They are filled with much passion and emotion. They speak about many of our heart issues.

My Soul Waits for God Alone Psalm 62

Part 1 verses 1-4 "Waiting Alone for Salvation"

It has now been two weeks since many of the announcements of closings. This social distancing has affected many aspects of our personal lives. The schools have closed, sporting events are cancelled, we can't go out to our favorite restaurant, and there is no gathering of God's people for collective worship. I ventured to the post office one day and they had lines designating sections. Only one person was allowed per section. BJ and I went to the grocery store. They had large hand sanitizer stations that were required as one entered. The store staff was diligently cleaning every grocery cart after use. I believe that God created us for community, but that is not so easy at this moment in time.

So the question that is on every person's mind is "how long will this last?" We ended last week with the concept of waiting for the Lord. Remember that this is active, not passive. It involves us going before God with our prayers and petitions. It involves us actively seeking the Lord in all of this. However, we live in an instant society and it is not our nature to live this way. The Psalm begins "For God alone my soul waits in silence;" Then the affirmation that from Him comes my salvation. During this time of isolation there is no one else who can provide this. For the writer, this is the ultimate 'statement of faith'. Biblical history is filled with many who waited while following God's direction for the promises of God to be fulfilled. Abraham waited 25 years for the birth of his son, Isaac. Simeon, in the gospel of Luke, waited for the coming messiah until his golden years. Nearly all of the Old Testament prophets waited for God to fulfill his promises.

In the second verse the writer moves forward with the reason why we can wait and be secure. "God alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken." Our security is in the one who is ultimately in control. Scripture has many examples of God being the rock. Jesus is referred to in the New Testament as the sure foundation. We are asked to build our house upon the rock instead of sinking sand. God is likened to a rock 20 times in the book of Psalms alone. We have this rock so that

no matter what batters us we will not be shaken. This is the concept in verses 3 and 4. It does not matter whether it comes from men or disease, we are still secure.

Part 2 verses 5-8 “Waiting for our hope”

The psalmist begins these verses with the same words as the beginning of the psalm. He has one change. He talks about hope instead of salvation. Now ‘hope’ from a biblical perspective is much more than wishful thinking. There is a certainty that comes because of the one who gives us the basis for our hope. It contains the same solid rock concept as in the opening section. The only difference is salvation is more of a present concept and hope is more of a future concept. In either case, verse 5 is identical to verse 2. The book of Romans helps us to understand this concept of hope.

...And we rejoice in in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom his has given us. Romans 5:2b-5.

So, this time of suffering in place is really only an inconvenience in the big picture. God is still in control and is our rock. Back during my college days I had on occasion to visit a church in Wellston, Ohio. It was a wonderful small church with many great people. The pastor met with a few from the church at 6:30 every morning for prayer. I joined them one day and was asked if there was anything that I wanted lifted up in prayer from my life. My response was that I needed to be more patient. His response was immediate. “Rick, do you really want to pray for patience?” Of course the answer was yes. He explained to me that God’s usual method of growing patience in a person was to bring suffering. He shared this verse from Romans with me. It has been a part of my life ever since.

The Psalm moves forward in verse 8 with a great affirmation. “Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.” We are in the process of actively waiting, laying our prayers and petitions before Him. At the same time, He is teaching us. It may be about patience, or learning about dependence on Him, or many other things through his spirit.

Part 3 verses 9-12 “Man compared to God”

This time of shelter in place has demonstrated some of the worst and some of the best of what it means to be human. I have been amazed at some of the hoarding and profit taking that some have demonstrated. The shelves at many stores have simply been emptied. At the same time there have been many others who have stepped up to help in countless ways. What a blessing that has been for so many! This section of the Psalm talks about mankind. It does not matter whether we are considered to be of ‘low estate’ or ‘high estate’, we are but a breath. The writer talks about those who would extort, rob, or make a high profit off of others. Their time is short.

The Psalm ends with more affirmation. First is that all power belongs to God. It may not be seen in the midst of the struggle, but God is in control. Those who belong in the flock know of His shepherding care. Secondly, the verse talks about His ‘steadfast love’. No matter where we are in life, or what situation we

find for ourselves, God knows everything about those details of our life. So, we wait patiently for God to work in our lives and in the lives of those around us.

I would encourage you this week to spend some time in prayer specifically for each other. Lift up one family, or individual, specifically each day in prayer. Place them in God's hands. If you have the opportunity to call them, or send a note letting them know that you prayed for them specifically on that day that would be great. Hopefully, we can gather for worship on Easter!