

“GOD IS OUR REFUGE FROM FEAR”

Psalm 142: 1-7

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Everyone desires freedom: We live in a free country. We are not to take it for granted because our freedom is a gift that has been secured through great sacrifice. Yet, similar to David in our scripture reading for today, we have fears which inhibit our freedom. In verse one, David deals with his fear by using his audible voice to pray to God. With his voice, David pours out his complaint before God (vs.2). David goes on to say that when his Spirit is faint (meaning weak or fearful), God totally knows what is going on (vs.3). In other words, God already knows and is able to help calm David’s fears.

A Hidden Trap: David is afraid that where he walks, he will be caught in a hidden trap put out by the enemy (vs.3). David feels so alone – there is no one who will help him. In terms of a hidden trap, what are the hidden traps that we encounter today which can cause us harm? We live in a culture where advertising messages bombard us like never before – especially through new technology and media we are connected to on a daily basis. We are constantly tempted to participate in consumerism. The advertisers want us to feel dissatisfied with our current life so that we buy goods and services to alleviate our dissatisfaction. This hidden trap encourages greed and makes us afraid that we do not have what we deserve. As a response to this fear, the idea is that we buy more products to make us feel better. Are you aware of this hidden trap that can distract you from a life in Christ? We should ask ourselves if we are serving the Lord God who loves us and gave His life for us, or are we serving the god of consumerism? In our scripture reading today, we read that David is aware of the hidden trap which he needs to stay clear of. In our contemporary context, however, the enemy of consumerism is more subtle, and so engrained in our culture, that it can cause destruction before we are aware.

The Lord is your refuge: David is fleeing for his life from an angry King Saul. David looks around and says that there is no one who cares for him or takes notice of him (vs.4). Then in verses 5 and 6 he cries to God saying, “You are my refuge!”

“Give heed to my cry..... Save me from my persecutors!” David knew he could not fight off his enemies on his own, but with the Lord he finds refuge and his fears are calmed. We are all to shout that God is our refuge. Say to your neighbor, “The Lord is your refuge”. We are to encourage one another to trust in the Lord, because he knows you so completely and is the one who can (and will) calm your fears. On the contrary, the things of this world and the pursuit of consumerism will leave you empty.

Bring me out of this prison! David speaks confidently about what the Lord can do in providing refuge and freedom from the prison of fear and worry (vs. 7). The Psalm goes on to say that those who follow the Lord will also notice him and surround him. In today’s context, as people of God, we are among those whom are referred to as ‘righteous’. Are we living up to what the Psalmist is describing in Verse 7: “The righteous will surround me...?”

Being the righteous: How do we offer care for and notice those who are vulnerable; in prison; under persecution, and suffering from fear? The answer: We love them with an unconditional love and do what we can to alleviate their suffering. Furthermore, we are not to judge because Jesus commands us not to. We care for them simply because they are loved children of God, just as we are.

Fear not! Use your voice to cry to the Lord. He notices you, cares for you, and knows you and your needs. Say out loud to the Lord, “You are my refuge”! Amen.