

Psalms: Tuning Our Hearts


Part I

"The Rock that is Higher than I"

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

2020.6.7



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

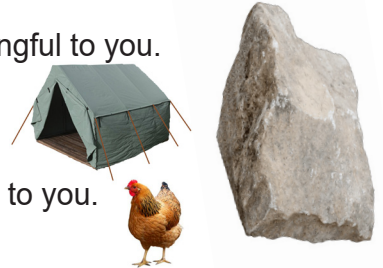
Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- God is described as a rock, a tent, and a bird. Which description do you find most inviting—and why?

Tell about a time when God's **strength and stability** ("rock") was deeply meaningful to you.

Tell about a time when God's **hospitality** ("tent") was deeply meaningful to you.

Tell about a time when God's **relational warmth** ("bird") was deeply meaningful to you.



Creating "God Space": "God Space" is where cynics, skeptics, and spiritually curious people can safely raise their questions, reservations, & doubts because we have listened well and demonstrated love in practical, authentic ways.

Who do you know who needs a "refuge" now, but does not yet believe in Christ as Savior?

How do you think they might respond to the imagery of Psalm 61? How could you help them be positive?

Develop a brief account of a time when you experienced God as "rock", "tent" or "hen".

(Make sure it is short, concrete, and specific.) What would it take for you to share it with them?

- Psalm 61 was written 1,000 years before Jesus. How does Jesus enrich its content and impact?
- What vows have **you** made to God (v. 5)? How significant is it that God **hears** them (v. 5)?

David says that he will "pay his vows to God day by day"

by "singing God's praises forever" (v. 8).

How can you "pay your vows" today?

Are your feet on the Solid Rock?
Write to:

BiblicalHopeAndHelp@gmail.com

Application-Challenge

- Jesus "opened the flaps" into God's tent—come to God through Christ.
- Develop the habit of accepting God's hospitality (and praising him for it).
- God is our rock and our refuge—cry out to him when you're in trouble.

Sermon Summary

Key Text: Psalm 61

Coronavirus has brought a crisis to America, to the world, to our lives. It's brought disruption, destruction of routines and income. For some it's even brought death. The murder of George Floyd has brought tragedy of a whole different sort. What perspective can God's Word give us for making sense of, and making it through, these evil days? Throughout June, we'll find help through a four-part series from Psalms. Psalms explore the full range of human experience in very personal and practical terms. Psalms explore the inner life and struggle, searching for sense, connecting personal experience with God's cosmic plan. The book of Psalms, Israel's song book, will help us "tune our hearts" as well. Today, Psalm 61 shows us how an individual can respond when confronted by difficulties. Psalm 61 tells us of David's experience. He'd been a shepherd boy, and became a king. He was a skilled musician, a writer of psalms, a warrior and a giant-slayer. But twice he also became a fugitive. Psalm 61 reflects his heart during one of these vulnerable times.

This is our experience too! David was driven to the "end of the earth" (v. 2a)—we'd call it "social distancing". He was removed from family, friends, resources—at a time of personal weakness (v. 2b). So he prayed (v. 1). I'll bet we've all prayed more in the past month than we typically have! The world says, "Look within for strength; if you can dream it, you can do it", but like David, we need more than mere human, personal, resources (v. 2b). Thankfully, God is our "rock", our "refuge", our "tower of strength" (v. 2b-3). This speaks to strength, stability, and safety. During COVID, we've all sought strength, stability and safety, too. Did we seek it in the advice of experts, like Dr. Fauci? In incessant hand-washing and social-distancing? The experts gave their best advice, but they're only human. When the dangers are real, only a God-sized boulder of stability will do! And when our rock happens to be God, it adds a moral, relational dimension to the situation (Deuteronomy 32:4; Isaiah 44:8).

God not only is our rock, he is our "home" (v. 4). This speaks of warmth, hospitality, relationship—with a lovely promise (Psalm 27:4; 23:6). The Hebrew verb "to dwell" means to sojourn as the weaker, dependent being. God is strong; we are weak. COVID has driven this truth home to us like nothing else! Hospitality requires people—but COVID has cut us off from each other. We've each been in our own "tents"—our own houses—looking out at a bunch of other isolated tents. We've longed to amble on over and grab coffee with a trusted friend, to extend and to receive the warmth of hospitality. But God has thrown open the flaps to his tent. Have you been going in regularly? He invites us to fellowship with him—have you been answering his invitation, or have you stayed in the wilderness? God gets even more relational: he not only is our "home", he's our "hen" (v. 4b)! "Wings"—the image is of a hen, protecting her chicks—are the ultimate in warmth, care, and proximity (Psalm 57:1; 91:4). The Hebrew word "take refuge" emphasizes us going to him. During COVID, what's been our refuge? Binge-watching Netflix? Eating a whole bag of chips? Staying in pajamas long after we should have been up and productive? None of these deliver the comfort they promised, but God's care is perfect: the unbreakable strength of a granite boulder, coupled with hospitality and a welcome into his tent, capped off with the relational warmth of a mother hen!

Verses 5 & 8 talk about "vows". Vows point to committed relationships (we make marriage vows). God fulfills his vow to receive all who repent and believe in him—have we followed-through on our vows of relationship? God promises to be a stable boulder—do we cling to him? God invites us into his tent—how often do we go in? God offers "mother hen warmth" to us—do we draw near? Psalm 61 reveals a man with an on-going relationship with his God: David sought God in the immediacy of his need (v. 1-2). He went to God in the moment because they had a long past history together (v. 3 & 5). David vowed—and followed through on—future relationship with God (v. 4 & 8).

God is "the rock that is higher than us". He's big, solid, stable, powerful; he's a refuge. But more than that, God is warm and inviting—he invites us into his tent, he invites us under his wings. David experienced stability, hospitality, and relational warmth with God during dark days. We can too—if we will.

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

**"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) is a simple way to study any passage.
We can use it to gain stability and confidence in God's protection...**

Monday—Psalm 27:1-3

Tuesday—Psalm 27:4-6

Wednesday—Psalm 27:7-10

Thursday—Psalm 17:11-14

Friday—Psalm 23:1-6

Saturday—***In preparation for worshipping your risen Lord tomorrow with your church family,*** read Psalm 80.

Need blank copies for doing more
"Five Question Bible Study"?
e-mail: Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) is it found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text?