

“Yes...But”
Psalm 62
July 22, 2018

INTRODUCTION:

A small Hebrew word appears six times in the first nine verses of this psalm, but is easy to miss in translation. It’s a word that would be transliterated *ak* in English and sometimes carries the meaning of the conjunction “but.” This psalm is about the life of trusting God, and this little word suggests a helpful picture of such trust. It is the “Yes...But” pattern of life. Yes, it is true that things look bleak, but I have a God who loves me and is in control of all things.

The bleakness for David is described in verses 3-4. Enemies were attacking him verbally with slander and private curses. The fact that this is a verbal attack indicates that these enemies were fellow Israelites, not enemies from a foreign nation, who would be expected to use more overt force. In some ways, verbal enemies such as these are more troubling. They are deceptive, because **“they bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse”** (v. 4). They were also slandering David, planting falsehoods about him within the community. If they should succeed, David would be in danger of being cut off from the life of the community. How does one fight against such enemies? This is David’s bleak dilemma. Yes, it is true that his enemies are seeking to ruin him and there is little he can do to fight them. But, it is also true that he has a God who is his rock, his salvation and his fortress.

Are you in a “Yes...but” situation now? It might be, “Yes, I just lost my job and have no idea where the money is going to come from. *But*, God will supply my need.” Or “Yes, it is true that my children have wandered from the Lord and there is little I can do to bring them back, even though I want it more than life itself. *But* I have a faithful God I can trust.” Or “Yes, my health is bad, *but* God will be with me.” Or “Yes, I see dark clouds on my horizon, *but* God is a shelter in the time of storm.” Let’s look more closely at this life of trust, the life that all God’s children are privileged and commanded to lead.

I. Trust in God Summarized – v. 1-2

What does it look like to trust God in the midst of opposition and trials such as David was experiencing? It means to wait on God in silence. **“For God alone my soul waits in silence.”** The life of trust in God means that we must wait on God for the simple reason that we have no other option. Most of us don’t like waiting and only do so if we have no other choice, no Plan B. When I leave the church for my daily trip home, it is usually rush hour. Traffic

typically backs up on Caldwell Mill Road as it approaches Valleydale Road, delaying my trip by as much as ten minutes as I wait to get through that light. But I have an alternative, a Plan B route I can take through Heatherwood. If I'm leaving around rush hour, I will always take this alternative route so I don't have to wait. But if I am flying overseas and my plane is delayed in leaving, I have no choice but to wait. There is simply no available Plan B. I can't rent a car and drive there. I must wait. Trusting God means that we recognize and embrace the fact that God is our only hope. There is no Plan B. Trust in God comes as we give up all Plan B's.

Our biggest challenge in waiting on God is indicated by the word "silence." We are to wait in silence. What does that mean? It doesn't mean that trusting God requires us to take a vow of silence. David is certainly not silent in this psalm. He talks to his enemies (v. 3), to himself (v. 5-7), to other believers (v. 8-10) and to God (v. 12). What kind of silence, then, is David advocating? He is advocating the kind of silence that renounces self-trust. Our tongue is often the greatest instrument of unbelief. It is our Plan B through which we seek to address our needs. It is with our tongue that we seek to control others to get what we want. It is with the tongue that we complain, that we seek to comfort ourselves with words of self-pity, that we seek to feel better about ourselves through boasting, and that we express anger when our Plan B doesn't work. The tongue is the greatest instrument of self-trust in the body, and it is self-trust that is the enemy of trust in God. We learn to trust God as we renounce self-trust.

Sometimes the most spiritual thing we can do is to shut-up and listen to God. I have a repeating nightmare in which I am standing up to preach a sermon for which I'm not prepared. As I start to preach my sermon, it dawns on me that I am making no sense at all, either to myself or to those listening. But I can't stop talking, and the more I talk, the less sense I make. What I need to do is to shut up and sit down. David is urging us to wait on God in silence, to shut up and listen. Perhaps I don't know what is best after all, and I need to be quiet and consider what God is telling me.

Why should we listen to God? We should listen to him because **"from him comes my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken."** These things speak of stability, security and rescue. God alone is the source of the things we need.

Let me make two applications of this. First, find a place in your life to tune out the noise of life and listen to God through his Word and Spirit. Second, trust God to guide you in life through waiting on him. There is an important principle of guidance that stems from this command to wait on God in silence. The apostle Paul refers to this principle in 1 Corinthians 7:17-24, where he states the principle like this: **"Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my**

rule in all the churches” (1 Cor. 7:17). He then specifically applies it to a person’s circumcision status and to slavery. The larger principle, though, is to stay where you are until God clearly calls you to make a change. If you are considering a job change, waiting on God means that you will stay where you are until God clearly calls you to make a change. If you are considering moving to a new house, wait on God to clearly lead you to do so. If he doesn’t, stay where you are.

II. Trust in God Fought For – v. 3-7

Notice that David largely repeats himself in verses 5-7. He speaks again of waiting on God in silence and says that God is his rock, his salvation and his fortress. There is a difference, however, and that difference is the significant thing about these verses. The address is different in that David is here talking to himself. **“For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence”** (v. 5). He’s fighting to trust God and needs to give himself a little pep talk here. This shows that trusting God is going to be a lifelong battle for us all. We might experience peace in trusting God at one moment, only to fall into self-trust the next moment. This is not a fight that can be won only once for us, but must be fought every day.

Notice how David fights the battle for trust. He doesn’t do it by minimizing the opposition. In verses 3-4, David speaks honestly about the challenges he is facing in the form of his enemies. **“How long will all of you attack a man to batter him?”** Notice the number of his opponents, speaking of them as “all of you.” And notice that the opposition is so long-lasting that he asks “How long.” Notice, too, that they were attacking David at a vulnerable time of weakness. He was like a leaning wall and a tottering fence. A leaning wall is a weakened wall. Gravity begins to act upon it to bring it down. All it takes is a good push and the wall topples. David’s opponents were all too willing to provide the push. They wanted to thrust David down from his high position. I notice here a common mark of evil. The evil person wants to push all others down in order to elevate him or herself. The weak person gets trampled and the powerful are envied and pursued to bring them down, all so the evil person can be lifted up. This is just the opposite of righteousness, seen perfectly in Jesus. Isaiah prophesied of him, **“A bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench”** (42:3). And Jesus didn’t seek to elevate himself, but to lower himself to be the servant of all. David was encountering just the opposite of Jesus, which makes these enemies the epitome of evil and darkness.

In the “Yes...but” pattern of trusting God, David’s focus is not on the reality of opposition and trouble, but on the Lord. He focuses on the “but,” not the “yes.” Yes, his enemies are evil and they are mighty. But David has a God who is more than sufficient. This is the God he trusts.

III. Trust in God Promoted – v. 8-12

The address changes again in verse 8. David is no longer talking to himself, but to others. **“Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us”** (v. 8). He wants them to know the joy of trusting in the God who is his rock, his fortress and his salvation. David has been fighting to trust God, and now his heart is drawn to serve others. This reminds me of something Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, where he summarizes the two activities of the Christian in this life: **“to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven.”** We wait and we serve. We wait for God to fulfill all he has promised to us. We will realize the Christlikeness for which we are predestined. We will be in the new earth with the curse removed permanently. We will have new bodies like that of Christ. None of that we have now, though we long for it all. We wait in faith, and while we wait we serve our Lord and love others.

David is serving in the advice he gives in verse 8. His counsel to us is to trust in God at all times. Life has its varied seasons, seasons of prosperity and seasons of trouble. David has experienced them all. In seasons of prosperity, the challenge is to trust God instead of being lulled into a life of self-trust, thinking that we don't need God and forgetting him altogether. In seasons of trouble, the temptation is to get angry at God and deny him. David wants us to trust God during all the ups and downs of every season of life.

The next part of the sentence is a beautiful and practical description of such trust. **“Pour out your heart before him.”** I have found that there are several obstacles to be overcome if we are to do this. One is simply knowing your heart. You can't pour out your heart to God if you don't know your heart. I have trouble with this, and I have found that I am not alone. Why do we have such trouble knowing how we're really doing? I think one of the reasons is that we think we have to handle things all by ourselves. But we know we're really not up to the task, so we deal with it through denial. We then become so well-practiced in denial that we lose touch at how we're really doing. If that describes you, then pour out your heart to God about that. In doing so, you have taken a significant step in trusting God. One of the requirements for us to pour out our hearts is that we must feel safe in doing so. David assures us that we are safe in taking our hearts to the Lord, for **“God is a refuge for us.”** A refuge is a place of safety, and that is what God is for us.

Verses 9-10 are a warning about two alternatives to trusting God: trusting people and trusting money. Verse 9 cautions us against trusting people. Whether they are of low or high estate, both are inconsequential. David imagines putting all people on one side of a balance scale. On the other side, he puts the moisture that condenses when you breathe on it. Surprisingly, he

says the more weighty of the two is the moisture of the breath. To put our trust in people rather than in God will lead to inevitable disappointment.

The same is true of trusting in money, whether acquired through illicit or legitimate means. In the search for money, some resort to extortion and others to robbery. Their hopes will prove empty. Others experience the lawful increase of riches, but David warns against setting the heart on such things. Notice that he puts setting the heart on riches, even when legitimately acquired, in the same category as extortion and robbery. When it comes to money, the most important dividing line isn't between money legitimately or illegitimately acquired, but between trusting in money and trusting in God.

David concludes this psalm in worship, referring to God as "you." **"Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God, and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love."** God has one message. He is a God of power and of steadfast love. It is only in Christ that God can be both a powerful judge and full of steadfast love. And it is through Christ that we learn to trust God. Jesus shows us that God is for us. We can go to him with anything.

The final sentence of the psalm gives us all something we can go to God with and trust him for. **"For you will render to a man according to his work."** God is a righteous judge, who judges in accordance to a man's works. That doesn't mean that we earn God's favor by our works, for we are all full of sinful works. But it does mean that when you come to trust God, he rewires your heart so that you actually do begin to love God and love others. So we can all trust God to change our hearts, a change that is both essential and impossible without God.

CONCLUSION:

Let's close with an application. What is your "Yes...but" situation? What is the challenge or trial in your life right now? It is important that you name it. David tells you to pour out your heart to God about this, just as he has done. Our natural tendency is to bottle it up inside of us. But our need is to speak of it to God. "Yes, this is my need, and it is too big for me." **"But,"** we must go on to add, "God is my rock, my salvation and my fortress." Let me give you a chance to do that right now.