

GOOD MORNING! Every day is a new day and God's mercies are new every morning.

AMEN! It is such a privilege to stand before this body today. I am truly humbled to be with you today.

LET'S PRAY!

Today's message is titled Why Wait?

TODAY'S TEXT IS Psalms 61: 1-8

PLEASE STAND AS WE SHOW HONOR TO OUR CREATOR FOR HIS PRECIOUS WORD.

Psalm 61:1-8

1 Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer;

2 from the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I,

3 for you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy.

**4 Let me dwell in your tent forever! Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings!
Selah**

5 For you, O God, have heard my vows; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.

6 Prolong the life of the king; may his years endure to all generations!

7 May he be enthroned forever before God; appoint steadfast love and faithfulness to watch over him!

8 So will I ever sing praises to your name, as I perform my vows day after day.

RE-READ Verse 4

**Let me dwell in your tent forever! Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings!
Selah**

THIS IS THE WORD OF THE LORD!

We are almost at the end of the DWELL Theme for the year 2022. Time sure does fly. Next month the new theme for 2023 will be introduced. Let me encourage you that The DWELL Theme should continue on beyond this year. It does not end December 31. It should continue. Be encouraged. God is not going anywhere He is still right there.

As we approach the end of the year are you Tired? Worn out?—Especially after this Thanksgiving Weekend? Overwhelmed? Bothered by little things more than usual? Sick of politics? Family drama? Relationship conflicts? Just feeling out of balance? Lingering illness with you or a loved one? Financial stress? Feel like you are being chased by something that seems to never go away?

The list goes on. Remember there is nothing new under the sun. Do you think you are the only one? No way! There are millions just like you and me! Before, currently and still to come. What makes all the difference? JESUS! AMEN!

This is the time of year we, as Christians, should be the most joyful. We just passed another Thanksgiving Day. As believers, we know it is about so much more than family, food and football. We know that every single day is Thanksgiving Day! No, maybe we did not have the life and death experience of the Pilgrims that the Thanksgiving Day is based upon, but we know that every single gift, big or small, is worthy of our thanks to God.

Please let me encourage you **Keep going! Keep on seeking the Lord in a relational way.**
You are here today or you are hearing this online. Either way, Praise God! Every day is a new day! Filled with blessings you and I cannot possibly count. Amen!

This time of year is all about the greatest blessing the world has ever known. The birth of Jesus! Sorry to say to our culture, that it is not about the sales or weather changing or wish lists. It is about the Creator of the Universe demonstrating His amazing, everlasting love for His Creation, you and me, by sending His One and Only Son (don't forget that part-One and Only) to save us. To heal us from our eternal sickness. To model for us the love of God in such a tangible and perfect way. Yes, God's mercies are new every morning. So much to be thankful for! Amen!

AS A REMINDER OUR THEME THIS YEAR IS DWELL: TO RESIDE, TO STAY. TO REMAIN. TO ABIDE. TO LIVE IN A SPECIFIED PLACE. TO TARRY, TO LINGER IN EXPECTATION

At this time of year many of us desire to hear from God. Well I have good news. This is not new, but I heard Pastor Justin Peters recently give a Guarantee! We all like guarantees don't we?

**“If you want to hear God speak to you, read your bible.
If you want to hear God speak to you audibly, read it out loud.”**

This is the essence of our DWELL Theme. We all want to hear from God. Every answer comes from the Word of God. Sometimes, often-times, we need to be patient. God's timing is not our timing. He will answer! Let's look at our Verses today. David has provided us an example of patience. An example we may not look to. Paul, yes. Job, of course. Noah, you bet. There are others, but I do not remember too many messages about the patience of David. This is where the title of today's verse came from. It has a two-fold meaning.

First, why wait? Because God's ways are not our ways. His timing is very different than our timing. The bible is filled with examples where people did not wait on the Lord. They moved ahead despite God's directions. Almost always whether it was the Abraham, people of Israel, Moses, Peter and the Apostles, the results were always poor. That's why.

Second, once we realize that our joy in any season of life comes from God alone. That He is worthy to be trusted, why would we wait any further in going to Him with every single need. Why would we wait to tell the world about the hope of Heaven that Jesus brings. So Why Wait?

CONTEXT

The 61 Psalm is one of many attributed to King David. Here, it is clearly a cry out to God. ESV title is LEAD ME TO THE ROCK. Many scholars believe this Psalm was written at the time King David was being pursued by his own son Absalom. His own son was isolated for a time for avenging the rape of his sister Tamar by killing his brother Amnon.

Eventually, he was allowed back into the Kingdom; however, over a period of about 4 years, he conspired against his own father. Through cunning actions, David believed he was in danger. He fled. Eventually and sadly a battle took place and Absalom died a gruesome death by essentially being stuck in the branches of tree where one of David's men, Joab, thrust three (3) spears through Absalom's heart. (See 2 Samuel 13 through 18 for these events.)

LEAD ME TO THE ROCK

The title of Chapter 61 does not say Lead me to Happiness does it ?

At our leadership retreat, we each sought to find the Psalm that was part of our lives right now. I couldn't help myself with Psalm 151 and Bobby McFerrin's song. Don't worry be happy.

Here's a little song I wrote

You might want to sing it note for note

Don't worry, be happy

In every life we have some trouble

But when you worry you make it double

Don't worry, be happy

Don't worry, be happy now don't worry (Matthew 6)

It is catchy, and as we leave Thanksgiving Day in our rear-view mirror, we look ahead to Christmas. Sadly, it is not about happiness despite Mr. McFerrin's message.

It reminds me the story of the Black Crow.

Moral of the story: Value every single blessing. Ask God to remind you of each one and let's make an effort to avoid comparisons.

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Now actually, Mr. McFerrin's song should be don't worry be joyful.

Being joyful is far different than happiness. Mr. McFerrin is talking about circumstances which can waver. He is talking about not sweating the small stuff because it is all small stuff in God's plan.

But Joy! Our joy comes from Christ alone. Joy is hope in the Lord and is experienced when we are in connection with God. DWELL!

It doesn't matter what our circumstances are, we can always have joy because our relationship with Christ is unshakable because He is unshakable. The Victory is Won! It is finished! Past tense! AMEN!

At the end of the day, we must come to realize that the world doesn't give us our joy and therefore it can't take it away. Your circumstances do not determine your joy. AMEN!

Let's look at Paul as a reminder. Who writes this while imprisoned.

Philippians 4 :4-7 - Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Romans 12: 12 - Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

These are great reminders. Our joy comes from our Hope of heaven and in our trust in Jesus Christ our Lord. Praise God for those reminders. We need them!

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A little further on this point as we move closer to Christmas Day.

Did you know that you can study the “science of happiness” in college. It is an actual academic field. It is true. Look it up for yourself. In summary, it teaches that gratitude is an important component of feeling happy. This model of thinking encourages pro-actively thanking those who treat us well or who help and serve us. That is good right?

But when it comes to the gratitude most people feel about life, beauty, family, and experiences, there is no one to thank. In their worldview, the best we can do is express our thanks in abstract (or, “to the universe”, which is becoming quite popular).

The Greek words grace and thanksgiving come from the same root. In many ways, we can say we accept God’s grace and then give thanks to Him by our actions in living, talking, singing out His grace. Grace and thanksgiving are connected to Joy in the Journey with Jesus.

Psalm 106:1 - Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 - Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Application/ Question: We hear this verse often. Monthly, weekly maybe even daily. What would it mean for you to practically live out these passages today?

Verse 1 -1 Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer;

David starts out with no presumptions. He is actively asking God to hear His prayer. Is that you? Whenever you come before the Lord, wherever you might physically be come with humility and a sense of reverence and awe. The next breath is not guaranteed. Praise God! Breathe in. Breathe out! More on that later, but let us always remember in whose presence we are coming into when we pray.

This reminds us also, that life is filled with pressure and stressful situations. As Colin says, “opportunities.” Sooner or later we cry out. We may not feel like we have a way to turn or a direction to go in. BUT GOD! We have a gracious, loving, merciful all-powerful God who is there. He is listening. He knows you better than you know yourself. You are His child and He has great plans for you. He is worthy of our trust. Come to Him! He is what David is doing here. Even though he is under attack. He comes to God with his needs

Verse 2 - from the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I,

(When my heart is overwhelmed” -King James Version)

The result all depends on where we turn for help. Sadly, many of us turn to vices, social media, or even people to escape. Just as sadly, we make poor decisions. The bible is filled with examples of these circumstances. Jonah- fleeing. Judas – betrayal and then lack of repentance. Examples of people acting as if they were God. The results are always disastrous.

David prayed, "Lead me to the rock."

That is a perfect model. When we are up against whatever challenges, what is our first reaction? David demonstrates what we ought to do. Go to the Lord! Stop making excuses as to why you can't. Those excuses are just a way for you to demonstrate that you are God and guess what? You are not!

What is clear is that David even as King is recognizing that being King is not enough. All that comes with that title is not sufficient. He needs the power of God to see him through. A great lesson for us.

We have the supernatural benefit of placing our trust in Jesus. Our Rock.

Matthew 7:24-27

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Our Rock!

In Verse 3, David has a good memory of all that God has done for him in the past. God has been the foundation. The Rock. The Higher Power David needed in times of stress and conflict. David understands this as Jesus did. In John 17, merely hours before He is about to be captured, tortured and crucified, He is praying. He is leaning into the Power of God the Father.

Hear we see David like others in scripture calling out to God for He is the answer for every need. He is the Rock. The Firm Foundation.

Go to Deuteronomy 32- “The Song of Moses”- He points to the God as the Rock, The Foundation

Verses 3 - 4:

**For I will proclaim the name of the LORD;
ascribe greatness to our God!**

**⁴“The Rock, his work is perfect,
for all his ways are justice.**

**A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,
just and upright is He.**

1 Corinthians 10:1-4- For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ²and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³and all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

This is a trustworthy point. Jesus is the Rock! It is true. In our current culture of moral relativism, what people do not understand is that the bible is true whether they believe it or not. The reality of all life is spelled out clearly in the Bible. It not my truth or our truth, it is His truth. There is no other truth!

The Rock remains a symbol for strength and a place of shelter and protection and security. David speaks of abiding there and of trusting in God as His Rock.

Application/ Question: Is that where we go first? To the Lord? What would change in your life if every challenge, big or small, moved you to seek the Lord first? What if you sought the power of the Holy Spirit and not your own strength to address every challenge and opportunity?

See Matthew 6:33-34 - But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. ³⁴ Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble

Now let's go deeper in our dwell theme with verse 4.

Verse 4 - Let me dwell in your tent forever! Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings! Selah

David is in a tough situation no matter the specifics. What is his mindset? To be with God forever! In God's location. Wherever God is, David wants to be there. He desires to take refuge with God. He is sincerely desiring to be in close proximity to God despite being in a difficult circumstance.

We see a similar expression of a desire to just be with God all the time in John Chapter 1.

John 1:35-39

The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples,³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.³⁸ Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?”³⁹ He said to them, “Come and you will see.” So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.

These are the followers of John the Baptist believed to be John (the one who Jesus loved) and Andrew. What is their mindset? To go wherever Jesus is going. This is in the middle of the day. They were dropping whatever they were doing to be with Jesus. This is similar to David’s desire to be in the tabernacle or tent with God. To just be with Him. To take up residence with Him. Remember the definition from earlier. To RESIDE. To linger in expectation.

Application/ Questions: Is that our first thought in the morning? How about as each hour passes? Is our heart and mind set on seeking Jesus first in all things? To DWELL in His presence and His Word. If not, why wait?

Please consider praying about it. Seeking God first will undoubtedly cause some changes to take place. Maybe you are doing well with abiding and seeking God first. Awesome! Now look for blind spots where you can relinquish control over to the Lord. Believe me those blind spots are there. Praise God for showing us our blind spots.

Let’s go further on in this verse. David is believed to have been on the run from his very own son. His own child was seeking to kill the King. In such a state, David confronts this issue by going directly to God. His desire is to be close to God. To be in close proximity. Jesus was also on the run after many moments of teaching.

See Matthew 12: 14; Mark 3:6; Luke 6:11; Matthew 27:11; John 5:18; John 7:1; John 11:53;

How many times in scripture do we see Jesus pull away to be in prayer. It was His custom. His time of deep relational communication with God the Father. He too was being sought after with bad intentions. He demonstrates the perfect model for us. To DWELL with the Lord.

Mark 1:35- And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

This is the essence of our DWELL theme is it not?

Verse 5 - For you, O God, have heard my vows; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.

Another reminder that God has provided for David in the past. It is a part of David's thankfulness here. He is reminded of all that God has supplied in His life. He is grateful. It is an attitude of gratitude. Not only that, but David comes expectantly in prayer. Not in an arrogance stance, but one in which he trusts in the power of God.

See Goliath in 1 Samuel 17

This is another important lesson for each of us. Not only for us to come to the Lord first but to come expectantly. Not in a "genie in a bottle" type of way, but as we walk in the will of God, we can have the blessed assurance that the Lord will provide. He will show us His grand plan for our lives. That in and of itself is a blessing.

Verse 6 and 7 - Prolong the life of the king; may his years endure to all generations! May he be enthroned forever before God; appoint steadfast love and faithfulness to watch over him!

David prays for blessing. He prays for God's covering. He prays for the coming of Jesus who comes from the line of David. Whose reign will last forever. He is trusting in God's promises. His perfect will.

2 Samuel 7:11b-13 - Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹²When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

Verse 8 - So will I ever sing praises to your name, as I perform my vows day after day.

Here we see a key contrast in how the prayer started out as compared to how it finishes. David began in desperation. He was literally crying out to God. He was faint and overwhelmed. That condition transforms to a praise and honor to God. David recognizes His responsibility to DWELL day after day forever. This life truly is a marathon and not a sprint.

Application/ Question: Let us be reminded that God keeps all of His promises. How He created a covenant that will not be broken. ASK: How can we not seek Him to fulfill that very same covenant?

This covenant gives us life. Remember my comments about each breath. Those very same

breaths remind me of a spiritual song. ALIVE.

ALIVE – Big Daddy Weave

**I was dead in my transgressions; Wandering in sin; I went searching for redemption
Down a road that had no end; I was walking through the fire; I was living on the run
With my flesh lost in desire; I was drowning in the flood;**

**But God!! rich in mercy; You came to save me; Now I'm alive;
But God!!! strong and mighty; You reached down for me; So I could rise; Now I'm alive**

**I am far from being perfect; There are days that I regret; On this battlefield, I struggle;
With the lies that I have lived; I have fallen short of glory; I can't make it on my own;
If You kept record of my past; I'd be sinking like a stone**

**But God!! rich in mercy; You came to save me; Now I'm alive;
But God!!! strong and mighty; You reached down for me; So I could rise; Now I'm alive**

Now I'm breathing in, I'm breathing out

I was in the grave, but God You called me out

I'm breathing in, I'm breathing out

I was in the grave, but God You called me out

I'm ALIVE!

Thank you Jesus! Yes, every breath counts. Each one is a gift, and with those breaths we should praise God every chance we get. We should live out in a thankful mode with our heart and mind in step with the Holy Spirit. The same power that was in Jesus is in us!

Now let us never forget why we have been made alive. It was to spread this incredible message of hope and glory. We are called to tell the world of the amazing Christmas Story. We are called to tell of why Jesus came. To save the World. We are called to recognize that our world is broken and that we all need a Savior. We are called to share of how Jesus, fully God and fully human, came to take the full wrath of God on our behalf that we might stand in His perfection and righteousness before God. Jesus made it clear for us as believers. With it we are called to

make disciples of all nations in the name God, the Father, Jesus, His son and the Holy Spirit

Matthew 28:18-20 - And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^l the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”).

It is not a suggestion.

Go and make disciples by how you live and what you say. Go! **Why Wait?** The world needs Jesus more than ever!

Remember as you go : The enemy wants to fill you with lies. He wants you to doubt. He wants you to throw in the towel. He wants to destroy you and your witness. He does not want you to believe that you can have access to the fullness of God.

Don't believe it! Trust in the promises of God. Stay close. Abide. Remain. Dwell.

WORSHIP TEAM

Come to Jesus? Questions? **Why Wait?**

Lord bless you all!