

Not Shaken

Psalm 125

“Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever.” Psalm 125:1

Thank you for joining our broadcast of The Seed Christian Fellowship of Rancho Cucamonga, California! The really great thing about online church is that you don't have to be in Rancho Cucamonga to go to the SEED! Look at me, I'm in The Villages, Florida, and I'm the pastor! We just had my mother-in-law's funeral and we are busy trying to make future plans for Dad—which requires many doctors and medical tests; not an easy task amidst the current COVID 19. I think it's great that we can all be together ONLINE, no matter where we live!

If you are joining for the first time, welcome. If you are watching live, there should be an icon at the bottom of your screen. You are welcome to connect with others and chat while we dig into God's Word. You can chat and write prayer concerns as you listen. There's even a place where you can click on to take notes (hint.)

We are now living in a different time and season. Who would have thought that we would all be singing, praying and sharing God's Wonderful Words of life through the internet, online? This puts a new meaning into saying that God's Words are a living and life-changing message. Now that we are no longer in a building, we are all realizing that WE are the CHURCH wherever we are. Have you ever heard that when you take the U R out of CHURCH...we are left with CH..CH? SEE...YOU ARE (UR) the church, wherever we go, we are the CHURCH!

We have been studying the Psalms of Ascent during the 2020 Lenten Season. Psalms are songs, and we are studying the Psalms of Ascent, Psalms 120-134. The Hebrew people sang these Psalms as they journeyed up to Jerusalem. Many made this trip three times a year, for the three major feasts: Passover, Pentecost and Day of Atonement. I encourage you during this season of being sequestered, isolated and quarantined, that you grab your Bible and read these Psalms. Imagine you are on a journey traveling UP a mountain road to Jerusalem. Read a verse or two and stop and pray. Read and reflect. In all honesty, we now have the time we need to draw near to God. The Bible teaches us that when we draw near to God, God draws near to us. I can't encourage you enough to use this season to draw nearer to God!

What is Lent? Lent is season of the 40 days that lead up to Easter, excluding Sundays. It is hard for me to believe that Easter is only two weeks away. Next Sunday is Palm Sunday and the following week is Easter. How easy it is to forget that Easter is just around the corner because we are all inside the window of the Coronavirus shutdowns, slow-downs, lockdowns, lockouts and quarantines. It is my prayer that during this crisis, and during these times of fear, worry, anxiety, and uncertainty, we will not lose our focus on the Lenten season. I pray we keep our eyes upon Christ, the cross and the empty tomb. Easter tells us of the power of the resurrection! Easter shouts out that death has been swallowed up in victory. Easter proclaims the forgiveness of sin. Easter declares the victory won by Christ on the cross and from an empty tomb! Easter

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declares to us: there is hope! Isn't that what we need today? Don't we all need a giant dose of HOPE? (Heaven's One Promise: ETERNITY!) Today I want you to have that dose of hope. Despite these times of worry, fear, anxiety and uncertainty, hope lives. Despite coronavirus, we can still have HOPE.

Our Psalm for today is Psalm 125. How appropriate that today's Psalm is Psalm 125. When I set my preaching schedule six months ago, who would have thought that we would be in such a time of uncertainty as this? The title of today's message is "Not Shaken." I'm praying that after today's worship, you will be able to say, "I'm not going to be shaken. I'm choosing to believe God's word is alive and redemptive. I'm choosing to believe that Christ's death on the cross has secured my victory.

Before we turn to God's Word, let us come to the throne of grace and seek God's mercy and grace. "Lord, God of all creation. Your love is from everlasting to everlasting. we come today, not because we are worthy, but because You are worthy. Lord, Jesus, we come to hear the soft sound of Your sandaled feet walking into our lives. Help us to trust in You alone. Help us to not be shaken by all that is coming against us in the world. Amen"

Psalm 125

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever.

²As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people both now and forevermore.

³The scepter of the wicked will not remain over the land allotted to the righteous, for then the righteous might use their hands to do evil.

⁴Do good, O Lord, to those who are good, to those who are upright in heart.

*⁵But those who turn to crooked ways the Lord will banish with the evildoers.
Peace be upon Israel.ⁱ*

Our Safety --- God is our Foundation

I've been doing messages like this for over 20 years. In every message, I ask something of you. I ask you, "SO WHAT, PASTOR DAVE?" "SO WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ME?" "SO WHAT DOES ALL THIS BIBLE STUFF HAVE TO DO WITH MY LIFE TODAY?"

This morning I have an early "so what" question tight here at the beginning of our message:

What does it mean for me to trust God? How do I trust God? Can I trust God when a pandemic comes? Can I trust God when everything is so uncertain? Can I trust God during a crisis?

The Hebrew word used for "trust" is "batach". Batach is the verb in this first sentence of Psalm 125. To the Hebrew people, "batach" meant: put your confidence in, rely on, be secure, put your hope in and believe. Homework time: "SO WHAT? is it that you put your confidence in, rely

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on, are secure in? What do you hope in and believe?” For the Israelites, as they climbed the 3800 feet from the Dead Sea to Jerusalem, they lifted their eyes up to the Lord and trusted that God would not let their foot slip. They trusted that God was watching over them—in their coming and their going. They felt secure despite the uncertain times they lived in. Enemies were all around them but they were choosing to put their “batach” trust in God.

When I was in seminary, I worked for my best friend, PJ. He and his two brothers have a construction company. They built new homes, hotels and barns. When we laid out the foundation to every new home, we would measure it two or three times before we started to dig. When the basement had been dug out, we measured again in order to lay the forms that would set the walls, and then we poured the foundation. The foundation had to be 100% square and level before the house could even be built. I often think back to those days. Life is about building on the right foundation. Jesus had a lot to say about the wise and foolish builders in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matthew 7) The foolish builder built his house on sand. When the winds, rain and storms came, the house fell. Contrast that with the wise builder who built his house on the rock. When the storms, winds and rain came, his house stood firm.

With our times being so uncertain, there’s a lot we can learn from these two builders! Are we building on the sand or on the rock? Jesus is the chief cornerstone, the rock of our salvation and when we build our lives upon Jesus, there is no pandemic, no panic, no fear, no worry, no uncertainty, and no insecurity that will shake your house. This is what the Psalmist is saying, ***“Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever.”***

Our Security --- God Surrounds Us

One of my favorite Bible stories is found in 2 Kings, chapter 6--the story of Elisha and his servant. Elisha was a prophet in the northern kingdom of Israel. Ben Hadad was the king of Syria who had been fighting the king of Israel. Every time Ben Hadad made plans to attack Israel, God revealed the plans of Hadad to Elisha. Elisha then told the king of Israel of the plans, and the Jewish armies escaped every time. Ben Hadad thought there was a traitor among his officers and was going to figure out who the dirty rat was until one of his officers told him that Elisha, the prophet of God, was the one who was telling the King of Israel all of Ben Hadad’s plans. Ben-Hadad decided to go and capture Elisha. Elisha was at Dothan with his servant. Ben Hadad marched his armies to Dothan by night and placed them all around the city. At daybreak, when the servant went out to draw water, he saw Hadad’s soldiers and was terrified. The servant ran back into the house, woke up Elisha, and said, ***“Oh, my lord, what shall we do?”***

Isn’t that the question and the cry of so many of us in these times of uncertainty? We look around and see that we are surrounded on all sides by an out-of-control virus. Listen again to the servant’s cry, ***“Oh, my lord, what shall we do?”***

Now listen to what the prophet of God says, ***“Don’t be afraid,” Elisha told him. “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them” (2 Kings 6:16).*** Then Elisha prayed, asking

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God to open the eyes of the servant, and when God did, the young man saw that the hills were ***“full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha” (2 Kings 6:17).***

I’m wondering if David was prophesying about this when he wrote Psalm 37, ***“The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.” (Ps. 34:7).***

What happened next is nothing short of miraculous: God afflicted the enemy soldiers with blindness! Elisha was able to lead them into Israel’s capital city, Samaria, where they were captured. The soldiers were treated kindly and sent home. And after this event, the Syrian bands stopped raiding Israel’s territory.

“Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.”

It’s not that we don’t have enemies. We do. Today we have an out of control coronavirus that has encircled us and closed us off from our family, friends and our way of life. Tomorrow it will be another enemy that comes to try and shut us down and encircle us: fear in our finances, pain from our broken relationships, panic during health concerns, worry over our children and other family members. Anxiety weighs heavy over all that is going on around us. It is not the fact that we don’t have any reason to feel insecure because we do. We live in a broken and fallen world. There are many things that make us feel insecure. But...today...I want us to do what Psalm 121 taught us last week: LIFT YOUR EYES UP. Take your eyes off the crisis and look to the cross. Again, today we have another wonderful truth in Psalm 125: Those who BATACH...those who TRUST...in the Lord are like Mount Zion. We are like a mountain. If we trust, we are building on the SOLID ROCK of Jesus Christ and not on the shaky sands of the world. As the mountains surround Jerusalem...God promises to surround us! When I first moved to California, I couldn’t believe how I was surrounded by mountains: to the north, south, east and west. This Psalm came alive to me; like the servant who came running in from the storm of soldiers shouting, ***“Oh, my lord, what shall we do?”*** we already know the answer. Are you ready? Repeat after me:

“Don’t be afraid. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them” (2 Kings 6:16).

“The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and the Lord delivers them.” (Ps. 34:7).

SO WHAT? We have a Savior --- Jesus who Finished the Work

We have a Savior and His name is Jesus. In two weeks, we will celebrate Easter and the empty tomb. In order to get to Easter’s empty tomb, we must go through a crucifixion. Out of the agony and pain of the crucifixion, we trust we have the resurrection.

Friends, we have a Savior who knows what it feels like to be surrounded. Surrounded in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed, ***“Not my will but your will be done.”*** When the storms, rains and winds of His arrest, trial and crucifixion came, Jesus trusted.

So What?

Most of you have heard of St. Patrick. Patrick was a young man who brought Christianity to Ireland. Patrick had been captured in England by Irish pirates when he was only sixteen years old and had been put to work as a slave for an Irish chieftain. After six years, Patrick escaped and returned to his family. Patrick was then called by God to return to Ireland as a missionary. What a task Patrick faced!

Patrick had no outward security. Where did Patrick find strength in such times?

Listen as I read St. Patrick's breastplate inscription:

*I arise today through God's strength to pilot me: God's might to uphold me, God's wisdom to guide me, God's eye to look before me, God's ear to hear me, God's word to speak for me, God's hand to guard me, God's way to lie before me, God's shield to protect me, God's host to save me from snares of devils, from temptations of vices, from everyone who shall wish me ill. ... Christ to shield me today against poison, against burning, against drowning, against wounding, so that there may come to be abundance of reward. **Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise....** I arise today through a mighty strength....ⁱⁱ*

This is true security. This is true safety! This prayer shows how to be surrounded in times like these ... Christ before us, Christ beside us, Christ, above us, Christ, below us, Christ in us! This prayer points us to the true Savior --- Jesus Christ.

In 2013 I was really sick with patches of open, oozing sores. I saw 15 doctors, but no one knew what was wrong with me. After four years, I found out the cause of my declining health: lead poisoning. I want to point you to what kept me, it's right here, found in today's psalm: BATACH...Hebrew word for TRUST: put your confidence in, rely on, be secure, put your hope in and believe. Did I trust God then? YES. Do I trust God now? Yes. Earlier I gave you some homework, and that's what I'm closing with: HOMEWORK "SO WHAT?"

Who do you put your confidence in, rely on, are secure in?

Who do you hope in and believe in?

If you've never given your heart to Jesus, today is a great day for that! If you have given your heart to Jesus, today is a great day to re-up, to recommit, to rededicate your life and heart to Him. Pray with me, "Jesus, I believe you are God's only Son. I believe you came to earth. You died on the cross and rose from the dead. Help my unbelief. In you, I am forgiven. My sins are as far from the east as is from the west. I give you my heart and I trust in You. Amen"

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March 29, 2020
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ⁱ [The Holy Bible: New International Version](#). (1984). (Ps 125:1–5). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan

ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, 117–19