

OpenDoors

A REFUGEE'S PSALM SHORT TALK

A simple reflection for use with a church or group.



A REFUGEE'S PSALM

This reflection was preached by a Syrian pastor to a church full of displaced Christians. It was first published in our Lent resource for 2016, *Live Like a Refugee* and it would make a good, simple talk for a church service.

PSALM 142 (NIV)

"David cried aloud to the Lord, he poured out his complaint before Him."

The book of Psalms is a Bible in itself. In this book we find all kinds of psalms that express emotions, feelings that represent all situations of life. You will find people asking God to intervene in what they are going through.

Psalm 142 is written in a crisis situation.

"Is not everyone against us?" David asks. I see in this psalm a cry of deep pain. David is saying that no one is concerned about him. Many times you see words about pain in this psalm, a pain that is killing from inside. When the writer is crying, he says what he is feeling about God. He speaks about God as someone from a distance feeling as if God is far away; he speaks of 'Him', not of 'You'.

God wants to hear your voice, He wants to hear what your feelings are, not just nice words. When we are honest in our feelings, God meets us, God comes to us. David is confused: in all the pain, where is God? When he becomes honest in his prayers, 'Him' becomes 'You'. God comes close.

You also see the suffering of a lonely man, a complaint about the situation he is in. Maybe he thought, 'When I defeated Goliath everyone thought me to be a hero. Now I have nowhere to run, no one asking for me, no one concerned about me. I am displaced, I don't have a place to live.'

Then you see in verses 5 and 6 David speaking about the portion of a believer. "You are my refuge, my portion." When David felt God near, he was able to see that God was his only portion. In the presence of the Lord, you are not alone; you can come from complaining to praising. Just come as you are.

"Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me." He expresses that at the end God will be good to him. That is sure for every believer, that the presence of the Lord doesn't depend on circumstances. He doesn't always remove the pain. Sometimes we have to go through it and we have to overcome situations.

Living with Jesus is living on another level. Uniting you with God, surrendering to Him, means that you are stronger than the pain you are going through. When no one understands you, go to God. Send Him your e-mail, He will come and you will feel the glory of His presence.

There are 30 more psalms in the Bible where the writer talks about taking refuge in the Lord:

Psalms 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, 25, 31, 34, 36, 37, 46, 57, 59, 61, 62, 64, 71, 73, 91, 94, 104, 118, 119, 141, 142, 144.

PRAYERS

A prayer for persecuted churches

*God of grace and truth,
You hold our lives in Your hand.
Hold especially, we pray, Your persecuted churches
where faith is costly, hope is low, and love is hard to find. Give to Your people strength beyond their imagining and joy that cannot be quenched, that their witness may provoke others to faith
and cause Your kingdom to go forward in peace and power.
This we ask in the loving name of Jesus,
Amen.*

A prayer from the persecuted church, from Pastor Douglas in Iraq

*Without Your grace we cannot survive,
Lord God. Even if there is enough food and there are good medicines. Come with Your grace into our lives. Thanks to Your grace we can see that You are really here, that Your strength is still present here, and that the Holy Spirit is working in our lives. We are weak, but belong to You, to You alone. We will follow You for all time.
Amen.*

A prayer from a young Open Doors supporter

*Lord,
Bless those who are persecuted for their love of you. Fill them with courage, peace and strength.
Softened the hearts of those who persecute. Reveal your love for them so that they too may worship and share your good news. May the government of Syria become infiltrated by those who love you, so love and not hate will guide the leaders of these countries.
Amen.*