

Thought for Today: October 16, 2007

Psalm 61 (NASB)

**Hear my cry, O God;
Give heed to my prayer.
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.
For You have been a refuge for me,
A tower of strength against the enemy.
Let me dwell in Your tent forever;
Let me take refuge in the shelter of Your wings. (Selah.)**

**For You have heard my vows, O God;
You have given me the inheritance of those who fear Your name.
You will prolong the king's life;
His years will be as many generations.
He will abide before God forever;
Appoint lovingkindness and truth that they may preserve him.
So I will sing praise to Your name forever,
That I may pay my vows day by day.**

I'm amazed at how many beautiful ways the psalmists can plead for God's help. Every time I think I've found a favorite line from one of the psalms, I read again and find something else that resonates with me. God has used language in a wonderful way that touches our hearts and minds. There seems to be no end to the power of the words in these psalms.

The psalmist, on this occasion, asks God to give him safety and security. He feels isolated and lost on the periphery. Only the enemy is seeking him. But this psalm isn't full of despair. It mirrors the tension we feel when, on one hand we feel alone and discouraged and, on the other hand, we know that we can be buoyed by the tender hand of God. The psalmist wants to feel safe, so he turns again to his God. A God who, like a mother hen with soft, warm wings, pulls the weak and vulnerable in close to Himself and bundles them in His arms. We all want to be held like that. We want to be able to close our eyes and relax without any thoughts of fear, stress, guilt, or pain. We want to see all of God's promises fulfilled. And we will. God's love and care is everlasting, and His word will never fail.

But we should also want to fulfill our promises to God. Do you notice how this psalmist is partially motivated by his desire to keep his vows to God? He seems to feel like he still owes something more to God, and he wants to fulfill his vows. That's a great example for us to follow. It's necessary that we work through trying times by asking God to take care of us, but it's also important to learn that we are served by God so that we can continue to live in service to Him and others. Let's be like God to those who need love and protection, and let's give ourselves sacrificially.

Safe in His arms,
Patrick Barber