

Speaking to the soul



Challenges

O God, have mercy on me, for people are hounding me. My foes attack me all day long. I am constantly hounded by those who slander me, and many are boldly attacking me. But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. Psalm 56:1-3

On a number of occasions, I have stayed in Benedictine monasteries in this country and in France. The monks' way of life is very different from my own, but I have been incredibly blessed by the opportunity to worship with them. Honesty forces me to admit that I didn't attend all eight of the daily services! What I found particularly impressive was that they read psalms at every service, and the whole book is read every week. There is huge value in reading all the psalms because they explore so many different themes. If you stick with your top five favourite psalms, you may come away feeling that they are all about praising and glorifying God, and you might overlook that many of them reflect times of agony, rejection and threat. The psalmists met God in every kind of situation.

In this particular psalm, David was reflecting on a time when the Philistines were pursuing him. He was in Gath, the home of Goliath, and he was so afraid of the reaction of Achish the king that he pretended to be insane. The king decided that he wasn't so short of madmen that he needed to meet him, so David was able to escape. I can hardly imagine what it must have been like for David to live with such continual threat, but he had worked out that if he had the living God on his side, he didn't need to be fearful.

Hopefully, your life is less pressurised than David's, but life presents an amazing range of challenges to us all. We need to be clear all the time that God is our true security and no one, and nothing, can take that away from us.

QUESTION

What is the biggest challenge that you have had to face, and in what way did you experience God's presence with you?

PRAYER

Thank you Lord, that you are always with me and that with you on my side I never need to be afraid. Amen